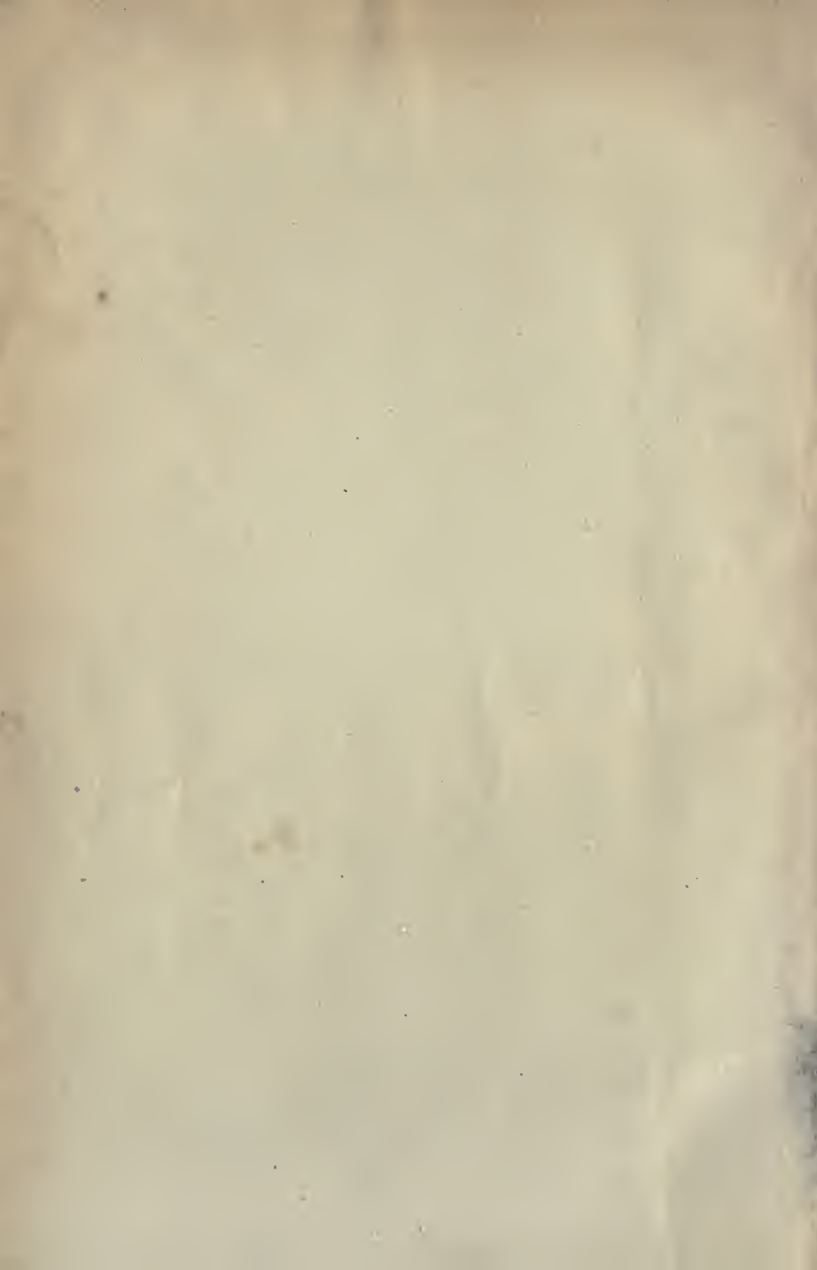


UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



3 1761 04336 0221





*To A. Newell
from J. T. 1886*

MEN AND THINGS RUSSIAN

OR

HOLIDAY TRAVELS IN THE LANDS OF THE CZAR

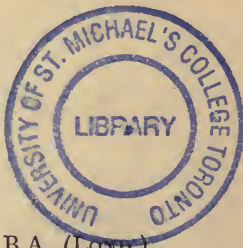
BY THE

REV. JAMES CHRISTIE, B.A. (LOND.)

ACTING CHAPLAIN TO H.M. FORCES

AND

MINISTER OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, FISHER STREET, CARLISLE



EDINBURGH: ANDREW ELLIOT

CARLISLE: CHAS. THURNAM AND SONS

1879.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

Preface.

THIS book, descriptive of a visit paid to Russia during his annual furlough, in the autumn of this year, is given to the public, because the author has reason to believe that the publication would be acceptable to not a few friends, and because of the interest at present felt by many in 'Men and Things Russian.' The author states nothing in the book that has not been matter of his own observation or experience, or with regard to which he has not obtained information from what would be considered the most reliable sources. He has set down nothing in prejudice, or to serve any end but that of truth; and, beyond everything, he seeks by his work to foster friendly feelings with a great people, whose well-being is bound up with our own.

CARLISLE, *December* 1878.



Contents.

CHAPTER I.

OUT TO RUSSIA, AND A TRIP TO FINLAND.

	PAGE
White Elephants—Desire to see Russia—Selling the Skin before Killing the Bear—Wallace's 'Russia'—Port of Leith—S.S. 'Petersburg,' Captain Barnetson—The Quarter-Deck upon matters Ecclesiastical—A Fellow-Traveller—What Drink does to the Sailor—Sea-Sickness—The Stowaway—'Brandy-Pawnee'—Elsinore—Shipping in the Sound—The Gulf of Finland—Mr. Plimsoll—Sunday in the Gulf, and Service on board—Russian Cruisers—Seafaring—Cronstadt—Sir Charles Napier—Up the Neva to St. Petersburg—Mr. Nobbs introduces me to Captain Rickard—Trip to Finland—Russian Treatment of Finland—Glacial Drift—A Silent Land—The Blaspheming Yankee—The Lake Steamer—Dress of the Peasants—Locks and Carriages—The Falls of Imatra—The Ancient Passion—A Peasant's Dwelling—The Posthouse and the Postmaster—Life, Customs, and Agriculture in Finland—A Finnish Sunday,	I

CHAPTER II.

ST. PETERSBURG AND MOSCOW.

Russia's Capital Cities—In the matter of a Capital—St. Petersburg—The Neva at St. Petersburg—View from the Cupola of St. Isaac's—The Hermitage—Peter the

Great's Room—The Winter Palace—Chamber in which the Czar Nicholas died—Mausoleum of Nicholas—Character of the present Czar, and of the Czarevitch—St. Isaac's, and Evening Service in the Cathedral—The St. Petersburg Metropolitan—Campanology—The Nevski Prospekt—Gostinnoi Dvor—General Sementoffsky—‘That is a way we have in Russia’—Life and Incidents on the Railway between St. Petersburg and Moscow—Railway Guards—An Old Believer—Russian Officers—Foundling Hospitals—Uses of the Birch and Lime Tree—Peasants' Gala Attire—Russian Songs—Railway Buffet Experiences—Moscow—The Cabman—Vicissitudes of Moscow—The Kremlin—The Redeemer Gate—View from the Tower of Ivan the Great—The Kolokol—Palace and Cathedrals—Napoleon and his Troops in the Kremlin—House of the Romanoffs—Ethnological Museum,	51
--	----

CHAPTER III.

EAST RUSSIA, AND THE VALLEY OF THE VOLGA.

Slavianski Bazar—Bound for the Fair—Censorship of the Press—From Moscow to Nijni-Novgorod—Emancipation of the Serfs and its Effects—Nijni-Novgorod—The Oka and Volga—The Fair at Nijni—Russian Trade—Smoking—‘Life’ at the Fair—Karl Karlovitch enjoys himself—Effects of Disafforestation—Life and Incidents on a Volga Steamer—Tartars at Evening Prayer—‘Idea’ given by a Russian's Face—Soldiers on the Volga—Cheap Provisions—Sunrise and Sunset Effects—Midnight Heavens—Kazan—Fruit—‘Our Lady of

	PAGE
Kazan' University—The Tartars—Service in a Tartar Metchet—Veiled Women look at the 'Infidel'—Memo- ries of the 'Vicar of Wakefield'—Kazan Corps suffers at Plevna—Captain Rickard—A Village on the banks of the Volga—Peasant Life, and Agriculture—The Star- ling and the Sunflower Garden—The Steam Bath— Windmills—Boys Suffering in the Flesh—A Village Church—The Working of the Commune—Fertility of Black Earth Country—Zones of the Horse and Ox— Peasants' Diligence and 'Passion' time—Russian Merry- making and Marriages,	102

CHAPTER IV.

SOUTH RUSSIA AND POLAND.

Homeward Bound—A Traveller's Miseries—A Night in
the Nijni Express—'Richard is himself again'—The
Travelling Cobbler—The Small Arms and Samovars of
Tula—A Night long to be remembered—The Spike of
Mignonette—Complexion and Costume in the South—
Bees—Fondness of Peasants and Bears for Honey
—Kief the Jerusalem of Russia—Monasteries—Pilgrim-
age to Troitsa—Infant Communion—The Buttery at
Troitsa—Monks at Dinner—The 'Skit'—Kief Lavra—
Catacombs of St. Anthony—Maimed, halt, blind, and
withered—Black and White Clergy—Dissenters and
Heretics—Old Believers—Molokâni—Stundists—British
and Foreign Bible Society—Evangelical Effort—Return
of the Russian Guard from San Stefano—Pilgrimage
of the Soldiers to the Catacombs of St. Anthony and
the Cathedral of the Trinity at Kief—The Army and the
late War—Soldiers *en route*—Bribery and Contractors'

	PAGE
Trickery—Dislike to German Officers—Why the Army pants for War—Panslavism and Socialism—Assassina- tion of General Mezentsew—Education defective— Drinking Habits—A Fact for Sir Wilfrid Lawson— The Army Doctor—Madame Engelhardt makes a Pil- grimage—Russian Rule in Poland—Warsaw <i>en fête</i> by ‘Invitation’—A Police <i>Invitation</i> —Dislike of the Russians to the Jews—Shylock—The Travelling Eng- lishman—Russia at the Paris Exhibition—The Gold- smith’s <i>Chef-d’œuvre</i> — <i>L’envoi</i> —Present State of Europe —Russia and England—An Outlook and a Hope,	153

CHAPTER I.

OUT TO RUSSIA, AND A TRIP TO FINLAND.

AMONG the last advices I got when leaving for Russia on the 13th of August there was this : ‘ Come back safe, and don’t bring any white elephants with you.’ The realisation of the first part of the kindly counsel lay in the power of higher hands than mine, and as He who led me out in peace has brought me back again in safety, to His name shall be praise ; the fulfilment of the second part depended, let us say, on the strength of my will and the depth of my purse. As for the strength of the will, perhaps the less I say about that the better ; but as for the depth of the purse, I may mention—speaking confidentially of course—that the distance of Russia from England, and the distances that must be travelled there by any one who desires to see something of the country, the general expense of hotels, and of most things, in the lands where the White Czar, as the Russians call their Emperor Father, reigns as autocrat, all combined, kept the purse-strings so tightly, that I brought home fewer white elephants from Russia than I ever

before purchased in any European country I may chance to have visited. About the only Russian memento I brought with me, or, to speak more accurately, that followed me, was, selfishly enough, my own photograph. I should not have thought of such a thing had not English and Russians alike said, 'Don't go home without getting your photograph taken for your wife ; it will be a work of art,' and in the hope that there might be a grain of truth in what was the common voice, I had it taken at Warsaw by Miechowski, the artist whose cameras and studios have turned out the works so much admired in the Russian department at this year's Paris Exhibition. So far as I am concerned, these favourite objects of art generally have turned out white elephants, as I know to my confusion of face ; as for the Russian photograph, those who may see it will be able to judge for themselves. Speaking of white elephants, I may say that I have often been rallied on this point. In process of time they become a serious consideration both for the traveller and domestic economics ; but while I plead guilty to the charge that on this score I have too often done the things I ought not to have done, I shelter myself by reserving this saving clause, which I know from a theological stand-point would be most unorthodox, that I am not nearly as bad as many others. Take the following example. A short time ago the *Times* reviewed a German work of fiction called 'The

Black Diamond,' in which the hero's jaw-breaking name runs as the Count Bogislaus von Bradszinski, who has for his mother the Countess Alexandrovna, the mother's being a name as purely Russian as her son's is purely Polish; and this is the author's description of the redoubtable Count: 'He had impaired his estate, not by riotous living, but by constant travelling in the East and elsewhere, whence he had brought back so many curiosities that his apartments were very like a museum; and not content with that, he had brought home a live curiosity in the shape of a swarthy Eastern maiden, ten years old, whom he had saved from the jaws of a tiger in Java, the said jaws having just crunched the little maiden's mother to death,'—and in the novel, on the bringing home of this swarthy maiden of course there hangs a tale. To conclude, what at any greater length would be tedious, I have never ventured to import any such live curiosities, with eyes black as midnight, and with limbs agile as the fawn's; and thus in the matter of white elephants, *animam meam liberavi*.

I had long wanted to visit Russia and see something of the Russians at home—since the time of the Crimean war in fact, when we championed the Turk, and spilt our blood like water on the banks of the Alma and among the ravines of Inkerman, and when neither February and March, the two trusty generals from whose tactics the Emperor Nicholas expected so much, and who by the way killed him, nor the dog-

gedness of the Russian soldiery, could drive our attenuated battalions out of the Tauric Chersonese, at a time when Russian bullets were far less feared than weevilled biscuit, and unroasted coffee, and shoddy uniforms, and contract boots soled with brown paper or something like it,—in a word, than the general mismanagement of the British Commissariat. Twenty-five years is a long time to carry an unfulfilled hope about with one, but time and patience work wonders. Four years ago I saw a good deal of a Russian family for a few days in Milan, and what I saw of them and heard from them increased my cherished desire. Three years ago I was thrown much into the society of a Russian general and his son for a month, at Schwalbach in Nassau, and their constant utterance was, ‘Why don’t you visit Russia?’ Since then Russia has afforded matter for the first leader in the daily and weekly press, and has been the foremost topic of conversation among all classes; and thus at last, pushed into a corner, I made up my mind to go to Russia.

The Russians have a proverbial expression about some men to this effect—‘They sold the skin before killing the bear.’ The nationality of the proverb is so evident that no one will suspect I am manufacturing it for the occasion, as the minister was said to do, who imagined his pulpit *forte* lay in the direction of anecdotes, and whose servant told the unwelcome

Saturday callers that they could not see 'the minister,' as he was in his study making anecdotes for the next day's sermon. After all it is a much easier thing for some people to say they will go to Russia than to get off. I do not allude so much to passport difficulties, although in all conscience the Russians are strict enough on that point at present, for what with warring and plotting, assassination and attempted assassination, Véra Zassoulitch, Nihilists, and perfidious Britishers, you must get a new passport and the *visé* of the Russian Consul-General before you are allowed to cross the frontier or disembark at a Russian port, and then in every town you visit your landlord must get it from you the first thing, under a penalty of thirty roubles, and take it to the police-office, whence it comes at last with, of course, a demand upon your pocket for being allowed, under compulsion, to carry about with you a relic of worn-out obstruction.

The difficulty of getting away to Russia, in my case at any rate, did not lie so much, or at all, in this direction, as in the consideration or anxiety of friends. One said, when it got out that I was purposing a journey to the north—and surely he could not be a philo-Russ,—'They will be sure to send you to Siberia.' This was such a clean hit out from the shoulder that, for the moment, I could only think of going direct to the tailor's and ordering a suit in the pattern of the Union Jack, that the sight of the

British colours might keep cantankerous Russian officials in constant awe of the English Ambassador. Another wrote, gently insinuating that the Russians could not be a very interesting people to visit, and recommending the fiords and mountains of Norway. I replied that I had been reading a good deal about Russia of late. As for the Norwegian fiords and mountains, I shall keep this recommendation in store for a future occasion, if that should ever be mine. Another good friend said he could understand any one going to America, but as for going to Russia — etc. ; but when I remembered how so many who have gone out to the United States have returned disappointed, because, to use their own words, ‘ everything is so like what it is in England,’ my purpose remained unaltered. Another suggested, just with a spice of sarcasm, that no doubt I would be visiting the Caucasus, and coming round by Kars and Batoum, before I got home ; but this time, when my ear caught the tone of the speaker’s words, I held my peace even from good words ; while yet another friend recommended me to come home by Cyprus. Perhaps I may go to Cyprus when Sir Garnet Wolseley has drained the swamps, and when the stalwart Highlanders cease to shiver and burn alternately under fever and ague, and when the mortality of the island is only twenty or thirty more in the thousand than what it has been in St. Petersburg for the last twelve months. To make a too long story short,

preliminary difficulties were got over, the powers that be, in my church and in my home, put no obstacle in my way, and with a resolve to see what could be seen, and pick up information wherever it could be had, I went away, and a kind Providence watched over me, and brought me back again.

There are two ways of going to Russia—by sea, from one of our north-eastern ports, and by land, that is to say, after the Channel, or the Canal, as the Germans call it, has been crossed. The last route is the most expeditious, but when I remembered having read in Wallace's 'Russia' that from whatever side the traveller approached St. Petersburg, unless he went by sea, he must traverse several hundred miles of forest and morass, presenting few traces of human habitation or agriculture, a wholesome dread of this weary monotony, coupled with the recollection that I should have land-travelling to the full before getting home again, led me to prefer making the outward journey by sea. Nor do I have any reason to regret having elected a route, which took me to the eye of Muscovy in seven days rather than in four.

A moment or two ago I mentioned the name of 'Wallace,' the latest writer on Russia. Having done so, this appears to be a fitting place for inserting a single sentence about his magnificent and extensively read work. Hepworth Dixon and Mackenzie Wallace, the one an Englishman, and the other unmistakably a Scot, are the two English-speaking

writers whose books on Russia have commanded most attention during the last few years. I do not include the name of Grenville Murray, for he seems to be such an out-and-out Russ-hater, that it would hardly be fair to regard him as representing a great country and a great people. How widely different Dixon and Wallace are from each other I need not say; but perhaps the criticism of their writings from a Russian stand-point will be even more satisfactory and memorable than that of any British reviewer. At any rate it will show in what light the Russians esteem the works of those who write about them. I was talking to a Russian gentleman one day in St. Petersburg about Dixon and Wallace, and asked his candid opinion of their works. This was his reply: 'Oh, Dixon's work is *poetisches*,'—as much as to say, He has taken a poetical licence with everything Russian he has handled; 'as for Wallace, his work is *Strengwahrheit*'—*downright truth*, and, as I take it, a fairer, not to say a more complimentary, opinion could not have been given.

Having made up my mind to go by sea, I selected the port of Leith for the point of departure as being within easy reach of Carlisle. The journey there, of course, calls for no special remark. The steamer in which I secured a passage was aptly enough called 'The Petersburg,' Captain Barnetson, an experienced and careful seaman, and a warm-hearted man. For thirty-eight years he had sailed in all seas, but this ripe

experience of the deep had bred within him no spirit of negligence or unconcern. His cabin was on deck, that he might be always at hand, and when he did turn in, he left orders with the officer of the watch to call him up, when from his chart he knew some fine bit of seamanship would be needed. Under such a captain you could not but feel comfortable, not to say at home. The first officer, Mr. Wight, was a Haddingtonshire man, and a genial young officer, to whom every duty appeared easy. Of the crew, anon. The Captain was a Free Churchman, the first officer belonged to the Scottish Establishment, and I told them I was a born and bred United Presbyterian. It would have been strange if among such a trio, spending hours and hours together on the quarter-deck, Scottish ecclesiastical affairs had not been alluded to. The Captain said if he was sure of anything, he was certain Disestablishment was coming. The chief officer inveighed bitterly against the United Presbyterians, or the U.P.'s as he called them, for always trying to overthrow the Establishment. I said, 'Well, gentlemen, whatever we may think or say about this question, there can be no doubt that the ballot-box will have something to do with it, some fine morning before long.' Granted the presence of the *perfer-vidum ingenium Scotorum*, and it is not difficult to generate heat when ecclesiastical questions turn up. We did manage to get up a little steam on board the steam-ship 'Petersburg,' on the strength of this knotty

question, but still we kept the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Representing as we did the three great Presbyterian bodies in Scotland, we could have met on the platform of the Evangelical Alliance, and shaken hands.

I had not got well on board when an old Edinburgh gentleman approached, and addressing me, inquired if I was the minister who was going out to St. Petersburg. I replied that I was going there. 'O then,' said he, 'it is you I have been looking out for; you are the only minister on board. I have brought down a lady and her three children, who are going out, and I should feel obliged if you would pay them some little attention.' I said I should be very happy, whereupon he brought up the lady and introduced her, but in the midst of the noise and bustle I quite lost her name. What arose out of this introduction may soon be told. After we had left the docks, I went forward to have a look at the ship, and among other packages saw a number, labelled 'Nobbs, St. Petersburg.' At the tea-table that evening I said, 'Captain, you have a great many packages on board addressed "Nobbs, St. Petersburg," and strangely enough I have a letter of introduction to a banker of that name in that city.' The lady to whom I had been introduced speaking up said, 'That must be my husband, for he is a banker, and besides I am sure there is only one Nobbs in St. Petersburg.' Well, I thought, we are getting

along swimmingly. But there was more to follow. In process of time it came out in way of conversation that Mrs. Nobbs' father had been minister of the Protestant and American Church at St. Petersburg, and upon asking his name, I was able to identify him with one who, at a later stage in his career, was a United Presbyterian minister in Aberdeen and Berwick, and an able botanist, Dr. J. C. Brown; while, last of all, it came out that Mrs. Nobbs was great-granddaughter to the Rev. John Brown of Haddington, whose annotated Bible is well known to every one in this country, to whatever Church he may happen to belong. During our week's voyage Mrs. Nobbs gave me an amazing insight into Russian life, and as for her husband, it would be hard to say how much I owe to him. He cashed my English money; he gave me a German-speaking clerk, who knew the capital well, to be my guide in St. Petersburg; he introduced me to an English gentleman as a *compagnon de voyage*, without whose kind offices I am certain my tour would not have been nearly so pleasant and profitable as it was; he calculated for me my probable expenses as long as I should be in Russia; and when I left for Moscow he said, 'Do you need any money? If you do you may have what you want, and should you run short in any Russian town, telegraph to "Nobbs, St. Petersburg," and in an hour you shall have the needful.' What, I ask, could friendship do more than Mr. Nobbs did

for me? I shall have more to say about Mr. Nobbs before this chapter is concluded.

We had to lie in Leith Roads for a couple of hours or so before the ship's papers could be got ready for the Russian Customs at Cronstadt, and as a large vessel was lying at some little distance from us, Captain Barnetson steamed round her that we might have a look at an Atlantic steamer which had been run ashore, got off, and patched up, and which the owners were then trying to sell to the Russian Government, to be added to the six cruisers they had already fitted out for the purpose of 'sweeping British merchant shipping off the seas,' as it was called, when a few months ago English and Russian relationships were somewhat strained. Six or seven Russian cruisers carry the broom at the mast-head, and sweep the seas of British bottoms! What a piece of nonsense! Surely the Russian Admiralty must have opened its eyes rather wide when it read one morning, how that in the British House of Commons, the First Lord of the Admiralty said on the previous night that he had forty large and powerful merchant vessels told off to serve as cruisers, with their armament ready to be put on board at an hour's notice, should the occasion arise. Two can play at a game of brag. But we shall not say too much about this, for if England can put forty cruisers over against seven of Russia, it almost stands to a certainty that Russia may set Afghanistan over against Cyprus.

But while we were sailing round the intended cruiser, a small tragedy was taking place round the mouth of the hold. There had been some changing of the crew before starting, and what between going off and coming on, so many healths had been drunk, that when things came to be put ship-shape a difference of opinion arose as to the way in which this should be done, and finally a fight took place. The combatants were the ship's carpenter and a Swedish sailor. I refrain from disagreeable details; it is enough to say the Swede got the worst of it by a long way. The Captain was vexed. The carpenter had sailed with him for thirteen years, and nothing like this had happened before. But this was not all: some of the crew took sides with the pugilists, and soon a sturdy Shetlander and a fiery Welshman were straining to have it out. The chief officer now interfered, and told the men they should have their will if they wanted it, but they must wait till their watch was over, and then he would see that everything was done fairly. This was enough, and next morning the Captain told me they had had it out in the fore-castle, but as the fumes of the whisky were going off by that time, they did one another very little damage. On the following day all had settled down quietly to work, the boxers pretty well ashamed of themselves, and, as the mate said, 'better friends than they had ever been before.' Poor Jack! the perils of the deep

are all as nothing compared with the dangers of the shore and the grog-shop.

To a landsman the first two days or so at sea are generally days of misery, whose memory he would gladly bury in oblivion if that was possible. It was not otherwise with myself when going out to Russia. The wind was stiff, the ship rolled, having an awkward cargo of pig-iron in her hold, to say nothing of a deck-load of naphtha, hailing from Dunfermline, whose odour pervaded every part of the vessel, and for the time I have indicated I was thrown upon the indulgence of an attentive steward and stewardess, who deserve a Homer to sing their worth. When *Bradshaw* gives hints for travelling on the Continent, and speaks of the beneficial effects of change of climate, it quotes the genial Dr. Granville as its authority, who must surely have been in the cynical vein when he said to his patients and friends, 'Embark for the Continent, and pray Heaven that you may be sick in crossing the Channel.' Had Dr. Granville crossed the Channel as I did five weeks after leaving Leith, when the equinoctial was raging, and seen as I did the unutterable misery of hundreds of men and women, I think he would have said nothing about the fillip given to the health by sea-sickness. But after all, we have least reason of all men, to complain of the tribute that Father Neptune exacts from those who arm their breast with triple brass, and venture on the deep, for the silver streak is our first line of defence, and keeps

us till now, and long may it continue to do it, from the conscription which is the curse and the heavy sorrow of the other powers of Europe.

One day at sea is very much like another, and the Baltic and Gulf of Finland are no exception to other waters. You watch the swelling wave and the magnificent emerald crest ere it breaks into foam; you scan the horizon with one of the Captain's glasses, and take a good look at passing vessels, and eat and sleep as well as you can, and then, when you grow tired of all that, you try to find out the condition of life on board. Two men on board the 'Petersburg' engaged not a little of my thought and attention. On the morning after we sailed, the Captain said: 'We have a stowaway on board. He has just been up to me asking for something to eat, and as I told him he must work before he could eat, I have set him to cook for the engineers.' I subsequently ascertained that the history of this stowaway was as follows: A fine-looking young fellow, having a wife and children, and a Glasgow iron-moulder out of work, he had gathered together a few shillings, and come through for the day to Leith, where he had learned his trade, in the hope of getting a job. Failing in his search, he fell in with a number of old companions, and these so plied the whisky that—if he spoke the truth—he had wandered on board the 'Petersburg,' lain down in the dark forecastle, and never awoke till the ship was far

at sea. Fortunately for him, as it fell out, the engineer's cook had gone ashore, and, getting drunk, had not returned, and so the Captain converted the quondam iron-moulder into the Alexis Soyer of the engine-room. Nor was he so bad a cook after all, for, as the first engineer told me, 'his output was only a little less than up to the mark.' If ever a poor wretch was penitent, I believe that man was. By the end of the week he was haggard in the extreme ; he ate not, he slept not, he was consumed with sorrow, his tears were piteous to behold. It was very evident he was no adept in degrading vice, his face could not belie him there ; he felt keenly the loss of self-respect his folly had occasioned him ; but most of all he seemed to feel for his wife, who, when he left her, was on the eve of another confinement. What would not the poor woman's grief be when her young husband never returned ? It might cost life, single or double. At the earliest, she could not hear from him under ten or eleven days. The end of the matter was that, at Cronstadt the Captain gave him into the custody of the British Consul, whose duty it would be to send him home at the cost of the Board of Trade by the first home-going vessel. The poor penniless wretch promised to write and let me know how it fared with himself and his wife, and he ought to have done so ; but no letter has ever come. I gave him such counsels as his position required, and told him that if he accepted them, and put them to a proper use,

an honourable, and happy, and useful future might be in store for him. May God grant this!¹

My other instance of what in this case appeared to be an utter moral wreck, was as follows. One day I heard the Captain say to the steward, 'How is that other passenger to-day?' 'The same, sir; he won't leave his cabin, and he is always calling out for brandy-pawnee.' Four days elapsed, and in the afternoon a sodden-faced, blear-eyed man, of whom I had just caught a glance for a moment when we were leaving port, appeared on deck. His name was—, well, let us call him 'Brandy-Pawnee,' and he was a biscuit-baker. This man had been engaged in Glasgow to go out to St. Petersburg, as head workman in a biscuit-manufactory, undertaking, according to the agreement, which had been drawn up by a lawyer, to make biscuits equal to those produced by three of the best British firms, to teach two Russian bakers to turn out as good work as himself at the end of two years, and to forfeit ten thousand roubles if he broke the engagement under five years. 'Ten thousand roubles!' said he, when I read that clause, 'they might have left out that bit at any rate. I am not worth ten thousand farthings.' This worthy had lived in San Francisco—or Frisco, as he called it—for five years, working in a capacity

¹ In a letter received from Captain Barnetson, and dated 'Cronstadt, October 25th,' the following sentence occurs:—'The man . . . , (stowaway) got a good job in Petersburg, but he would not stop, and returned last voyage. I believe he is a ne'er-do-well.'

similar to that for which he had been engaged in Russia, and I should say strong drink had been his stumbling-block. He knew the names of all the concoctions of American liquor-bars, and also the method of preparing them. 'Brandy-Pawnee' had been his constant cry on board, until the Captain ordered the steward to stop the supplies, and then in sheer despair, weak, miserable, and with appetite gone, he turned up to the light of day. Poor fellow, he was not devoid of intelligence, and the tale of his adventures was amusing in the extreme. Alas, for his failing! He said he had left a wife and six children behind him in Glasgow, and was once and again moved to deepest sorrow when he spoke of his youngest child, a beautiful little boy, he said, who had been killed by falling out of a window. He was going out to St. Petersburg for £150 per annum, at eight roubles in the pound sterling. I fear but a very small proportion of this utterly inadequate salary would ever find its way to Glasgow. When we got to Cronstadt, a man connected with the biscuit-manufactory came on board to conduct this passenger to St. Petersburg, and just before we landed, Brandy-Pawnee came to me and said, 'See what thieves these Russians are! I took this man down to the cabin to have a drink; we only had a glass of vodka apiece, and out of half-a-crown they have given me that!' The coin he held out was a twenty-kopeck piece, the fifth of a rouble, and

worth somewhere about fivepence. He had bought fourpence-worth of Russian spirits, and getting fivepence back, had allowed himself to be cheated out of one and ninepence. I said to him, 'My friend, we are about to part, let me give you two advices : first, let that glass of vodka you have just drunk be the last you shall ever taste in Russia ; second, get your wife out as soon as you can.' The boat landed, the passengers went every man his own way, and this poor wastrel was hurried off in a drosky to the biscuit-manufactory. In relating his case to Englishmen in St. Petersburg, they told me there was every likelihood that the November frost and snow would hurry him to his grave. 'When shall this drink curse cease?' I find these words in my diary, and conclude this incident by placing them where they now stand.

As we got well up the Baltic, and into the Cattegat, vessels became more numerous, but it would appear there is a great falling off in the shipping trade this year. The Captain said this was owing in part to the war, and also because the flax, hemp, and corn of 1877 had been bad. He had gone up and down the Cattegat when it was so thickly studded with sail that steering was a matter of difficulty. On the third day out we neared the Sound, and were soon 'by thy wild and stormy steep, Elsinore,' the scene where the tragedy of 'Hamlet' is laid. Hamlet's birthplace lies outside the town. The castle is still

used as a Danish fortress, and is a striking object. The town of Elsinore is quaint and old-world-looking, and abounds in pilots and fishermen. A pilot boarded us here, and took us through the Sound, a comparatively narrow channel, with the Danish and Swedish mainland on the right hand and the left, and these full in view. The coast lies low, and is studded with vast herds of black and brown cattle. Copenhagen is at no great distance from Elsinore, and from the St. Petersburg route can be seen quite well with the naked eye, and still better with a glass. We saw a Danish man-of-war salute the castle, and have the compliment returned. The Sound was filled with the shipping of all nations,—old-fashioned Swedish and Norwegian vessels; steamers that appeared to have all their propelling apparatus on deck; Shoreham sloops, whose condition, the Captain said, argued temerity on the part of those who navigated them; Dutch brigs, whose prows seemed even more obtuse than their sterns; sailing ships, that were things of beauty to look upon, and smart steamers, which cared for neither wind nor tide. Shortly after the pilot came on board we passed a Danish brig rigged out in all her colours. The Captain had been married the day before, and was to heave up his anchor that night. Perhaps he would take his bride with him; if so, a good voyage and good fortune to the gallant sea-captain's wife!

The mouth of the Sound presented a sight not to

be witnessed every day. Between fifty and sixty vessels lay becalmed, like 'painted ships upon a painted ocean.' Every stitch of canvas was set from the royals downwards, but as for progress, there was none. The beauty of the scene was undeniable, but from the sailor's point of view it was purposeless. They wanted not the empty but the bellied sail. In a few hours it is likely they would have their desire gratified, for a smart breeze sprang up. It was not difficult, or rather it was hard, not to spiritualise such a scene. Man there had employed all his endeavour, but God's wind was wanting, and therefore his labour profited not. And so it is in spiritual things. 'It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.' Without God's furthering blessing we labour in vain, and spend our strength for nought and in vain. But these shipmen had done their duty. They had spread the sail, and were waiting for the breeze. Let it be the same with us in the higher life; let us do what God appoints, and bide His time for blessing our work! We shall not wait in vain.

Thirty-six hours from Elsinore and we entered the Gulf of Finland. We are now in Russian waters, and do our best to keep the weather-eye open. 'But please, sailor,' said the little boy, 'which *is* the weather-eye?' 'Both, my little man,' replied the tar. Very peaceable this day was the Gulf of Finland, but when Boreas descends with angry blasts,

the sailor may count himself happy who sails in a taut ship, with plenty of stout canvas, and under a captain who knows his work, and knows his waters. The ribs of many a gallant ship, and the bones of many a brave sailor, lie strewn along this sea-floor. The Gulf of Finland, even more than the Baltic, is a veritable grave for shipping. Hardly a winter passes without many a ship being lost in these waters, and never a tale of the sea reaches the ears of the mourners. All they know is that, the vessel in which they were interested, cleared, and set sail, and was never seen or heard of again. Pacing up and down the quarter-deck with Captain Barnetson in the Gulf of Finland, all on a sudden he stopped and said, 'I have a younger brother lying somewhere about here.' This was the tale.—This brother was a captain like himself, and sailed from a British port to Russian waters. When his ship was ready for sailing on one occasion, he said to the managing owner, 'We are too deep in the water. They have put too much cargo on board.' 'Please yourself,' said the owner; 'if you won't go, another captain will take her out by this night's tide.' What could the poor fellow do? Which should it be?—to be flung out of his situation, or run a sea risk? Sailor-like, he ran the risk; he reported at the Sound; was seen to enter the Gulf of Finland, a storm came on, and ship and all hands were lost. Shall not God require the lives of these poor men at the hands of avaricious owners? Many

a sailor lives, and shall live, to bless the day when Samuel Plimsoll rose up to plead for him, and went distraught in the British House of Commons, and by downright earnestness terrified an unwilling Government, a Government rendered unwilling by the opposition of the men who made their money at the risk of sailors' lives, into compliance with a righteous demand.

But now the week which we began in Carlisle has run its course, and a bright Sunday morning breaks on these placid waters. We get the children together in the cabin,—the Captain's two sons, and a singularly intelligent little girl, Edith Nobbs,—and, after singing a few children's hymns, speak to the little ones about Him who could walk on the sea as on dry land, who had but to rebuke the storm-tossed waters to produce a great calm, and who holds the waters of the vasty deep in the hollow of His hand. On the previous day I had asked the Captain if he would allow me to have a little service on the Sunday, and he replied that he should be only too glad, at the same time recommending an hour after the sailors had got their dinner. Accordingly, at an early hour in the afternoon, the crew rigged up the quarter-deck as a church. A sail was hung up on the windward side of the steamer, that we might be as comfortable as possible; the crew were informed by the officers that service would take place; a seaman was sent to summon to service by ringing the ship's bell—our church-bell for the

occasion; the Captain sat in the seat of honour, as was right, and the rest, passengers and crew, got seats as best they could. We sang the simplest psalms and paraphrases, to the simplest tunes. We asked God to blot out our sins, and to give us hearts to love Him. We thanked Him for His Divine Son, and asked that all might grow in likeness to Him. We thanked Him for a good voyage, and asked Him to land us at last in the peaceful haven when all our voyaging was over; and we did not forget to ask what was good for all whom we loved at home. We then spoke, or tried to speak, a few words such as seamen need, and prize as well as landsmen, and then we sang again, and pronounced the benediction, and our little service on the deck of a British vessel in the Gulf of Finland was over. We prized that service, and were a thousand times repaid for it, for the Captain came up to us, and, giving such a shake of the hand as only such a man can give, said before his crew, 'Thank you, Mr. Christie.' That was all. What more could any man have desired? Depend upon it, although sailors have a hard, rough life, and are exposed to many temptations, they value a word in season.

During the night three of the Russian cruisers passed down the Gulf, and next morning we saw other three. This made six, and was all the Colossus of the North had, unless by that time, the vessel about which there had been negotiation when we left Leith

had been added to the fleet. These cruisers formerly belonged to the Hamburg Shipping Company, are famous for their speed, of which they gave us a very fair specimen, and are powerful-looking vessels. They were then on their way to the Black Sea, for the purpose of transporting the troops from Turkey to Russia. They had a long voyage before them, and the Captain expressed it as his opinion, that as the Russian men-of-war's men had very little chance of getting their sea-legs in ordinary times, the majority of the crew would just be about as useless as landsmen when they crossed the Bay of Biscay. The money for purchasing these cruisers was principally provided by the Slav Committee in Moscow.

In these northern seas the inhabitants of the deep often show well, but this voyage was an exception. Far from seeing half-a-dozen whales or so, spouting and sporting, we did not even see a solitary porpoise. Nor were the birds of the air more numerous than the fishes of the sea. We once saw a flock of wild geese, flying high, and going right across the Gulf; an occasional glance might be had at some sea-bird or other; but the only living thing that came near the 'Petersburg' was a solitary hawk, which lighted on the rigging one evening about the gloaming, and which the sailors chased from mast to mast, and used every artifice to capture, but could not secure.

It was interesting to mark how, as far as man could provide, the safety of our passage was secured.

The Captain took his observations from the sun every day at noon, and from his chart thus knew to a nicety where the ship was; and it is well for us too to remember, that from every side of life it is necessary to take observations and learn where we are, and that above all it is necessary to take them from Him who is the Sun of Righteousness, whom the glorious sun in the heavens only faintly symbolises, and who shall never fail to lead all who follow and obey His indications, in ways of pleasantness, and in paths of peace. Nothing in the Gulf of Finland is more noteworthy than the constant succession of lighthouses. How difficult the navigation must be in time of war, when these are left in darkness, it is easy to understand. In the higher life we have plenty of lighthouses also. 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path,' says the inspired writer. Let us make it our endeavour to live on such terms of friendship with Heaven, that the light of the Word may never be put out, so far as we are concerned.

The longest voyage comes to an end sometime, and so was it with the short run to St. Petersburg. On the night of the sixth day out we drew up to Cronstadt, and as the pilot would not come off to us because of the growing darkness, there was nothing for it but to drop anchor, and ride in front of one of the frowning forts. This was a wretched night on board; as the ship swung, the wood-work

in the saloon and cabins kept constantly creaking, and this utterly banished sleep. As soon as it grew light we had our salt-water bath and went on deck, and after all did not regret lost sleep, and a half day lost for St. Petersburg, when we looked upon the massive fortifications. What between the strength of these defences, and the use that is sure to be made of torpedoes in all coming naval warfare, it almost stands to a certainty that Cronstadt is impregnable. As we looked upon the place we thought of Sir Charles Napier, and his famous order of the day, when at the beginning of the Crimean war he got his ships into the Baltic on his way to Cronstadt: 'Get up the grindstones on deck, and sharpen the cutlasses,' signalled the Admiral. Poor Charley, he never even had a brush with the Russians. Some said the waters were too shallow, others that the Admiralty tied his hands, and as the Russian fleet would not face him in the open, he just found out a channel, the capacity of which the Russians themselves knew nothing about then, although they know it now, and flung a few shells into the town, and had to come into warmer waters when the Russian winter came on.

And now the anchor is once more up. A sheep-skin-coated Russian pilot has boarded us, and at half-speed we make our way between the granite redoubts and fortifications. Long grey-coated sentinels pause for a moment to look at the Union Jack, which

now floats at the mast-head to show our nationality. The saffron-faced sailors peer at us over the bulwarks, and out of the port-holes of the 'Peter the Great,' the 'Minion,' and other men-of-war, and the anchor is again dropped pretty well up the channel of the Neva, against such a time as the 'Petersburg' can get a berth in the docks. In a short time the Custom-house officers came on board with their subordinates. The morning was pretty sharp, and the first question, after mutual greetings were over, was something like this—'Well, Captain, have you got anything?' The Captain knew what the question meant, and after boiled herrings, and something to qualify their saltiness had been discussed, the necessary papers were filled up amid an incessant smoking of cigarettes, or papirosses, as the Russians call them. The luggage was then sealed with the stamp of the double eagle against the arrival at the wharf at St. Petersburg, and the officers—polite and helpful gentlemen—told those who had to leave the ship that they were free to go. We bade good-bye to all our good friends on board, and in a few minutes were being hurried in a tug to the shore, where, the morning boat for the capital having already gone, we had to wait for three hours before we could get off. This delay was not so annoying as might be supposed. The more one travels abroad, the less does a little delay harass, as time is given to study the people and their manners. I went into the town of Cronstadt, hauling 'Brandy-

Pawnee' along with me. The poor wretch groaned as we hurried along, and declared that my pace would soon take the life out of him. There was nothing remarkable to be seen, and as the description of a Russian town remains to be given in another chapter, I shall take no further notice of this low-lying, flat, and altogether uninteresting place.

The river steamer started at last with a rare assortment of naval officers, priests, Jews, merchants, and peasants on board ; and the two hours' run up to the capital was not unpleasantly spent in taking notes of these passengers. I may mention that, at no great distance from Cronstadt, there lies on a slight eminence the Imperial residence of Oranienbaum, where the wearied and worn Alexander occasionally seeks rest from the load and care of empire. At the Custom-house by the Nicholas Bridge we landed ; under the auspices of Mr. Nobbs, who was in waiting to receive his wife and family, my luggage was very quickly passed through the Customs, thanks to his influence, and, hurried off as on the wings of the wind in a drosky, a Russian cab which you imagined every moment would come to unutterable grief, and reduce you to the same low estate, as it bounded over the atrocious pavement, in a few minutes I was seated in a comfortable front bedroom at the Hôtel Angleterre, in the great square of St. Isaac, distant from Carlisle by sea, rather better than 1400 miles

We are now in the Russian capital, but without touching upon St. Petersburg at present, let us hurry off for a short trip to Finland. My good fortune at St. Petersburg was something extraordinary. On the second morning after I had landed in the Russian capital, I happened to call at the Joint-Stock Bank, on the English quay, and among other things, my willing friend the banker said, 'I intend to dine at your table-d'hôte this evening, and I should like to see you there.' I went according to appointment, and was introduced by Mr. Nobbs to an English gentleman, Mr. Thomas Rickard, a Cornish captain, who had been in Russia for eight years, as manager of large estates and mines in the Urals for a number of British peers and commoners, and whose undertakings I shall have further to notice. When the dinner was pretty well over the banker said to me, 'My friend Captain Rickard is shortly going to Moscow and East Russia, like yourself; it is on his way home, and I have brought you together to see if you can join partnership.' As the Captain was willing, I had no ground for objecting, for it was easy to see that the companionship of one who knew both language, people, and country, would be of immense advantage to me, and we agreed to travel together as far as Kazan, down the Volga. Captain Rickard was a literary as well as a practical man. As a writer, he was anxious to make a study of Finland for a chapter in a forthcoming work; and suggesting a few days'

tour into the Grand Duchy, we arranged to set off next morning. Accordingly, at a moderately early hour we turned up at the Finland station, the 'Finnski Wachsaal,' the Russians call it, and booked for Wiborg, seventy-five miles from the capital.

You are hardly out of St. Petersburg before you get into Finland, a word which probably means 'the Fenland'—and well it may, because of its boundless swamps and morasses. Before sketching this Finnish tour, I may state that, after many and bitter wars with Russia, Finland was conquered and annexed to Russia under Alexander I. in 1808. It has a population of rather under two millions, 86 per cent. being peasants, and 98 per cent. adherents to the Lutheran faith. The treatment of Finland by Russia is wide as the poles apart from that of Poland. Poland has been, and is still repressed—Finland is coaxed and petted. The Finns retain their own language, constitution, religion, and money, and the conscription has never been forced upon them, although there are those who expect to have it soon. Those who fancy they have the best insight into Russian diplomacy—and they must be passing acute if they can penetrate into, and understand that mystery, allege that Russia has designs upon Norway and Sweden—there are persons who see Russian designs all over the world in the future,—and that this is the reason the Finns are treated with so much blandness. Once into Finland the character of the country is soon displayed.

It is sub-arctic, and in a great measure unsubdued by the industry of man. The railway runs through long stretches of forest, in which the principal trees are the red pine, the birch—the weed of the country, which from its rapid growth chokes out the young growing fir, the mountain ash, and the aspen. The country is strewn with boulders, great and small, of pink granite, showing the line of the glacial drift, a drift which it is said extends from the north right through Europe as far as the environs of Berlin. What a wonderful planet we inhabit, and what changes it must have undergone during the lapse of untold ages! Tropical flora has recently been discovered beneath the glaciers of Greenland. The grain principally cultivated seems to be rye, which is a magnificent crop this year. Much of it is grown in spots studded with the granite boulders, and where the tree-roots have not been stubbed; and from all one has read, this district presents no slight resemblance to a Canadian backwood clearing. Patches of barley and oats may also be seen. Wheat would not grow in so high a latitude. Potatoes, and a few turnips are also grown. The mode of agriculture looks clumsy in the extreme to an English eye. The ploughman actually holds the whole of the plough up in his hands, and turns up a dwarfed drill with a close two-pronged piece of iron. In such a country, the little and short-necked horses might be expected to be pretty well devoid of fire, and if one might

judge of them from the method of shoeing, this would be correct. One man stands by the roadside and holds up the foot, the horse quietly standing without being tied up, while another pares the hoof and hammers on the shoe. But if they are tame, it is wonderful how they can cover the ground when put into the post-carriages.

In driving through the country the silence is something oppressive, and this, no doubt, is to be attributed to the marked absence of animal life. In addition to the domestic animals, all I saw was as follows: a snake, a squirrel, half-a-dozen magpies, one stone-chat, and one linnet, a hundred or two of grey crows, and a solitary butterfly. Poor thing! how had it come there? Perhaps it had been blown on the wings of the wind from some of the huge cabbage-gardens in the environs of St. Petersburg. The long and severe winter, when the snow lies for months four feet deep, will no doubt account for the fact of this singular absence of life. As for the botany of the country, I have noted the following: bilberries, wild strawberries of a delicious flavour, the blue-bell and Michaelmas daisy, the marsh-mallow, the bracken in any quantity, only a few of the commoner ferns, splendid lichen, and juniper so luxuriant that many of the bushes attain to a height of ten or twelve feet. After these remarks, which may only be interesting to a few, it is time to resume the detail of the journey.

A railway station and buffet in the Russian empire, are always places of interest to a stranger, as the lengthened halt affords plenty of time for the study of life, alike 'still,' and the contrary, most notably the latter. At one of the halting-places midway between St. Petersburg and Wiborg, we encountered a filibustering Southern Yankee, with a large vocabulary of blasphemous expletives. A constant succession of the vilest expressions, spiced the otherwise scanty vocabulary of this nuisance—for he forced himself upon us, with what he most likely reckoned Attic salt. Captain Rickard at last asked him what 'Damn' meant. 'Oh,' replied he, 'that word, like "Hell," is a figure of speech.' I told him I hoped he would find it so, and remarked that he seemed to me very unlike the majority of his countrymen, whom I looked upon as being the salt of the earth. 'The salt of the earth!' said he incredulously, 'what can you expect from a country that was cradled in infidelity?' I replied that, America no doubt imbibed some Voltairean principles at the time of the French Revolution, but the good that was in the country saved it. Yes, blessed be God, the Mayflower still blossoms in America, and the holy savour of the Pilgrim Fathers clings to their posterity, like the scent of roses to the vase in which they have but once been distilled. This blasphemer, I rather think, tried to make himself disgusting in my eyes as a minister of the Gospel,

and he decidedly succeeded in doing so. He 'guessed' that war would some day break out between England and America on the fisheries question. I replied that could never be after the Alabama arbitration. Suddenly he sank into silence and turned away, and happily we neither saw him, nor heard his voice again. Such wandering rowdies as these would disgrace their country wherever they go, if they were not beneath contempt.

In about four hours we arrived at Wiborg, a pleasant little town not far from the Gulf of Finland, with a burnt-out castle standing on an eminence. After dining at a hotel, where the landlord did his best to make us lose the steamer, that we might be compelled to post, and use his horses, we got on board the boat going up into the interior. Everything about it appeared ridiculously small, in fact it was like the boats on the Dutch canals that Thackeray liked to write about: the creeks and havens, and the narrow waters it had to ply in, accounted for this of course. The machinery seemed to be everywhere, and oil was king; but then what Finn or Russian would ever think of objecting to oil? An awning was spread over the hinder part of the vessel, where the first-class passengers were directed to go; the fore-part was filled with the country people. The men all smoked, and always smoked, and the tobacco was atrociously bad. It only costs fourpence per pound in Finland, and it is as clear as

day, that it would be an immense boon to the Russian Government, as well as to the Finns themselves, if a duty of eightpence or a shilling was put upon it at once. These men, like the Finns in general, were tall, broad-shouldered fellows, fair to a degree—I did not see one dark-haired person in Finland,—clad in home-made cloth of the coarsest description, but no doubt comfortable enough. Their clothing was as clearly made at home, and by themselves, as the cloth was evidently manufactured in the domestic loom. Sturdy Karls—*Karlar* is the Finnish for men—they were. Nowhere in Finland is the sheepskin coat worn, as in Russia—at least in summer. The women—Queens, or Qvennar, as the Finns courteously style the other sex—would have been beautiful, as they were now comely, if their faces had not borne unmistakable traces of severe winters, badly-ventilated houses, and 'hard fare. Bonnets were unknown conceits. A kerchief, gay-coloured and large, covered the head. Men and women constantly talked, but very softly—a marked feature this, in these northern solitudes. People seem afraid to hear their own voice. This softness of speech is also often met with in Russia. Demonstration in talking is never seen. Here, and all through Finland and Russia, there was a marked absence of pocket-handkerchiefs. If any enterprising Manchester manufacturer could only get the Czar to issue a ukase decreeing that, from a certain date

each of his subjects should possess a couple of these articles of an ordinary European wardrobe, and sent his agents out in search of orders, he might make his fortune in no time. The steamer repeatedly put in at small landing-slips, jutting into the beautiful lake of the thousand islands. The pines came down to the edge of the lake. A number of pretty houses were scattered about, most likely the summer residences of the St. Petersburg nobility and merchants. We had on board the German gardener attached to the grounds of one gentleman. He was a terrible grumbler. The winter, he said, lasted for nine months, and the summer for three, and they were cold. They had two nights' frost in July, and that destroyed all the fruit. At some distance from Wiborg the system of locks begins. This is rendered necessary by the vast body of water which comes down from Lake Saima to the Gulf of Finland. Twenty-eight of these locks have been constructed, all of them being of the most substantial character. To pass through one or two is pleasant enough; but when it comes to ten or a dozen it becomes tedious. On the wide portion of the lake we passed whole fleets of timber-boats.

Leaving the steamer at Rättigärvi we got a conveyance, driven by an ancient Finn, and drawn by three horses abreast. This was the only dear driving we had in Finland, and was due to the fact that the conveyance had something to do with the hotel at

Imatra. When we went to the Government post-houses, the rate was never above three farthings a mile apiece. The change to this method of travelling, after the long water-passage, was delightful. The horses shot down the hills at a tremendous pace, as if the momentum acquired by the carriage would send it half up those still beyond. The country was grandly rude,—huge forests of pine, sub-arctic flowers and fruit, and stretches of cultivated land. We were bound for Imatra, where there are falls known by the name of the Russian Niagara. The distance was twenty-four miles, and midway we changed horses. The second part of the journey was through a more subdued part of the country. Small villages, having not more than six houses, were scattered pretty thickly up and down, and although it was now nine o'clock at night, the peasants were in the fields, some of them ploughing for the autumn rye-sowing, and others cutting down the grain. It was after dark before we reached the large wooden hotel at Imatra. The accommodation was good, but the prices very high, and we were the only visitors at that time. It was ghostly work taking supper within a dozen yards of the thundering falls, in a room capable of dining two hundred people, where the darkness was only made visible by the two wax candles placed on the table. In the morning we visited the rapids, a deep channel worked out in the granite formation, along which the waters flowing from Lake Saima thunder and bound.

The effect was imposing. A rope has been slung across the chasm, with a wicker double chair attached to it. It is worked by a windlass, and as you are slowly drawn along, you can form a very good idea of the body of water both above and below.

Finland is a cold country, but the ancient passion is not unknown even there, for Venus holds her court under the polar star as well as beneath the southern cross. On the other side of the falls from the hotel, I wandered about in the wood in search of lichens, and other easily-carried mementoes, and seeing a birch-tree peculiarly barked, I went up to it, and cut off, and brought home with me the following touching pastoral : ' Oh, my dear, if you only knew how I love you ; you are all the world to me, my darling, my all ! ' Poor fellow ! should the writer of these words ever succeed in getting the dainty maiden who was all the world to him, may he never be disillusionised ! A French proverb says, ' Life is a tragedy to those who feel, and a comedy to those who think.' Boys are constantly waiting about, offering for sale curious water-worn stones of mica schist. They have got this shape by gyrating in the hollows worn in the rocks, in the sides of the rapids. We saw several of these hollows, at portions of the formation where the rapids must have flowed ages ago. Some of them were at least six feet deep, and made like the shaft of a mine.

Near the bottom of the falls we went into a peasant's house, to see how the ordinary Finns were

accommodated, and were kindly received. It was indeed a sorry habitation. The timbers of the roof were as if they had been charred, through the action of the smoke, which escaped from a hole in the roof,—a clear proof that Finland is on the confines of the rudest state of existence. A large square oven was built into one corner of the dwelling-room, and wooden benches were ranged round the walls. These, with a small table, constituted the furniture of the larger half of the house. In addition to the husband and his wife, two little girls stood in the middle of the floor. The little things were pleasant to look upon, and by no means uncommonly timid. I gave them a fifteen-kopec piece, and asked for a kiss, and after a gentle pressure, the little Finnish maidens were willing enough. The bread consisted of large flat rye loaves. We had a drink of milk, which tasted as if the pasture was not bad. By the exercise of a little easy pantomime, I gave the peasant to understand that I wanted to see the bedroom. He smiled, and motioning me to remain where I was, went to another part of the house. As he was rather long in coming back, I began to be afraid that I was putting people to inconvenience; and so it was, for when he returned and took me with him, I found he had roused from their slumbers two karls, who were now standing slouching at the door, looking as if they were only half-pleased. The judicious offer of a few cigarettes, however, made us all good friends. Had

I known any one would have been abed at half-past ten on a fine August morning, I should never have thought of asking to see the arcana of the household; but as they had been sleeping with their clothes on, perhaps, after all, no great harm was done. This sleeping-chamber was of the rudest description; truckle beds, with thick coverings, formed all the furniture. There were a few gaudily-coloured pictures on the wall, two of them representing the Czars, in the order in which they reigned, and others, Russian assaults on Turkish fortified cities, where all the Turks seemed to be put to the sword, without one Russian having occasion to bite the dust. How unhealthy such dwellings must be—and this was superior to many we passed on the road—during the long and dark winter months, it is easy to imagine; but perhaps, on the principle of the survival of the fittest, the weak soon get killed off, and the rest live to old age; at any rate, seventy, eighty, ninety, and ninety-five years of age are common enough among the Finns.

After an early dinner we started again, posted to the Imatra river, and after being ferried across the broad foaming stream, in which there is superb fishing, we had a long drive in a rude carriage to the village of Ruokalakas, situated on the shores of Lake Saima. Here we put up at the post-house, a humble enough dwelling, but clean, and one which exactly suited our purpose. It was tenanted by an old land-surveyor, brimful of knowledge about everything

Finnish, who, in his old age, had been put into it by the Government, that in the evening of his days he might earn a modest livelihood without severe bodily exertion. Our host was a fine, venerable-looking old gentleman. He wore a long grey beard, which he tenderly stroked from time to time. He was a bachelor, and a family on the other side of the road from his house, attended to his wants. His house was a model of old-aged bachelor neatness and order. Informing him that we wanted to know something about Finland, he was most willing to accommodate us, and lay open his garnered store. He was a polyglot, and talked to us in German. For five mortal hours he poured forth his magnificent detail, smoking a long pipe all the time, and drinking tea, out of tumblers of course, while we took copious notes. Suffer me to condense within the briefest space, the tenth part of the information he gave. It may be regarded as an epitome of Finland in general.

The village of Ruokalakas was small, but well off; it had twelve houses, a telegraph station, and two shops. Beer was brewed and freely drunk, but no spirits could be vended; this the law did not allow. The Government town was Wiborg. The division of the land was communal, and it belonged to the peasants. In that particular commune there were ninety villages. All the inhabitants in these villages were Finns, except four Russian merchants and two

Russian peasants. The Russians belonged to the Greek Church; all the others were Lutherans. Each village elected its elder for the commune, and he held office for three years. A Government official was appointed to defend the cattle from the wolves and bears. The peasants brought him word whenever these animals appeared, and the neighbourhood was roused to go to the chase. The health was good, and the people were strong. There was only one midwife to every thirty-three square miles, and her services were seldom required. The people believed in witchcraft. In that commune there were three witches, but their occupation was wellnigh gone. The Finns were fond of liberty. Each peasant had at least 75 acres of land; some had 150; others who were wealthy, had as many as 600. He was a Government officer, and had to make out the returns of farming stock, etc. These had just been completed for the year, and we extracted from his papers the following figures. The common run of agricultural belongings was as follows on each farm:—One horse, hardly any foals, two or three cows, an occasional ox, one or two calves, two sheep, one or two pigs, one or two hens; but neither geese nor ducks. A horse costs £8, a cow £2, 10s., a sheep 10s., a Finnish pig, full grown, £1, a Russian pig £2, a hen 10d., one dozen eggs 6d., one lb. beef 3d., do. mutton 2½d., pork 5d., butter 8d. in summer, and 1s. in winter, rye-meal 3s. 4d., flour

44 *Finland : Taxation—System of Farming.*

6s. 8d. per poud of 36 English pounds. The field-work was done by women as well as by men. The children herded the cows and sheep. They depended entirely on their crops. The crop failed every six or ten years, and then there was a pretty severe famine. To provide against this as well as possible, there was store grain, and the Government did its utmost, so that no one should die of hunger. You might as well sow rice as wheat in Finland. Although the produce of the commune was cereal, still it did not yield more than two-thirds of what was consumed. Once a week in winter, the peasants usually ate meat, twice, during the field-working season. The cattle were fed for the most part during winter on straw. As for taxation—and here the old man lifted up his hands,—that was heavy, and grew heavier every year. The people were taxed from the age of sixteen to sixty-four. £5 would cover the taxation of a family. Landed property brought two per cent. The peasants were contented, thanks to the easy nature of the Finn—fancy a non-grumbling English farmer!—and looked forward with resignation to bear increased burdens. On large holdings the proprietor let out his land on the *obrok* or *corvée* system; that is, he got two days' labour in winter, and three in summer per week from the peasant, in lieu of rent, giving 1s. in winter, and 1s. 6d. in summer as daily wage, the peasant meanwhile supplying his own food. The village life was

orderly and peaceable. Crime and theft were rare. There was no police, only a sheriff and under-sheriff for each commune. When the Finns quarrelled, they mostly had it out in hard words; at the worst in fisticuffs. Happily no spirits could be sold, but the peasant's capacity for beer would do credit to Sir John Falstaff; it extended to five and six bottles. I repeatedly saw that. They also drank mead, but that was considered children's drink. When they got drunk, they became jolly, like the Russians. They were almost to a man Lutheran. They must all read and write now—very different from the Russians—before they could be confirmed, and as they had to be confirmed at the age of fifteen, the Church looked well after education. Education was prized, but was not compulsory. Among the old people all could read, but only six or seven old men out of 9000 could write, or read writing. They were all instructed in the leading tenets of the faith. The commune was very large, and had only one church. The peasants attended church well in summer; in winter they could not often come. The law did not allow marriage to take place at an earlier age than twenty-one. There was an exception, however. If a young man was an orphan, and lived alone, he might marry earlier, and thus get rid of his desolation. Divorce was practically unknown. Illegitimacy was very rare. In that commune of 9000 people, there might be fifteen cases annually. Cer-

tain diseases, fearfully common in Russia, were never heard of. Cholera had been there in 1831, but in a mild form, and since then had not returned. Typhus was rare. Intermittent fever was more common. The population was increasing. The people were cleanly, and in every house there was a bath-room. The bath was used almost every night during the field-working season, and unfailingly twice or thrice a week by all. I wish we had only half as much cleanliness in England. No Finn would ever dream of going to church on Sunday without having had the steam-bath on the Saturday night.—Such is a dwarfed and attenuated outline of our old host's most interesting statements.

We had been informed that the Finnish church-going and service was a grand sight. At about eight o'clock on Sunday morning, I climbed the rocks above the post-house to have a survey, but little had I anticipated what now burst upon my view. A whole fleet of boats, forty or fifty in number, with their white sails set, was bearing down the lake to the church at Ruokalaks. From every creek they seemed to drop out, and soon there was the number I have named. In addition to these, there was a steamer heavily freighted, and a number of boats propelled by oars. The rowers in many cases were women, the men lazily reclining, and smoking their long pipes. The sight was magnificent in the extreme, and reminded me of a fleet of fishing-boats leaving the

harbour-mouth. In the light of the language of Scripture it might be said,—‘Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?’ And soon the road past the post-house was alive with pedestrians, and peasants driving their swift carriages. Each carriage held two passengers. Every cross-road seemed to furnish its contingent, and by the time they were all assembled round the church, their numbers must have exceeded one thousand. The men were dressed mostly in grey clothing. You would have said all the grey coats of Cumberland were there. The women wore dark blue dresses, with a scarlet border at the bottom, two inches deep. Two kerchiefs covered the head, a white one upon the hair, with a long pendant falling down the back, and a gay-coloured one over it. Some of them wore massive silver ornaments, as large as the hollow of a saucer, on their breasts. They were all cleanly and wholesome to look upon, and bore manifest traces of hard toil and of the severe climate. Many of them carried baskets of raspberries gathered in the woods, to refresh themselves by the way, and around the church-doors I saw several groups reclining on the grass, and eating bread and fruit, before entering the holy place to receive food for their souls. The women all carried the Psalter and Liturgy. Between two and three hundred carriages were tied up in the vicinity of the church, and the whole scene forcibly reminded one like myself, of a

Presbyterian Communion Sunday in the country, in the olden time. Hearing some plaintive singing proceeding from the churchyard, I went there and witnessed three funerals. One was that of a grown-up person, the others were those of little children. A huge pit had been dug in the sandy formation, and two men going down into it by means of a ladder received the three coffins, and placed them alongside each other. Hundreds accompanied these funerals. Who were the mourners it was impossible to tell. No mourning-dress was worn, and no signs of grief were visible. The Finns are not a demonstrative race. The chant over, the pastor, dressed in black, and wearing a white tie and bands, came to the edge of the grave, and casting three wooden spadefuls of sand on each of the coffins, repeated three sentences. He then read several prayers, and after all had said 'Amen,' in token of their submission to the Divine will, and of their faith in the resurrection that is to be, and a short silent prayer had been offered up, the pastor leading, all quitted God's-acre, and accompanied him to the church. Taking their seats, and, as in the Lutheran Church everywhere, the women sitting apart from the men, the preparatory service began. This consisted in the singing of a Psalm, to a tune led by the clerk, who stood before a desk in the front of the gallery, and was assisted by a number of young men and women. This would continue for twenty minutes, the church meanwhile

gradually getting better filled. When the pastor, a professorial-looking man, entered, the singing ceased, and ascending the lofty pulpit of the huge church, capable of holding two thousand people, he began his part of the duty by reading prayers. The sermon followed; it was short, and read in an unimpressive manner. During the delivery of this sermon, in a monotone, I did not wonder at seeing a number of the people fast asleep. They had been working hard at harvesting all week, had come many miles that morning, and on sitting down, an unusual thing with these hard workers, in the church, were overcome with heaviness. Who would lack the charity to say of them, 'The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak'? Had the pastor 'delivered' his sermon instead of reading it, and had he possessed a little of the Boanerges fire, it is more than probable that he would have had a more wakeful and attentive audience. At the close of the sermon the pastor prepared to administer the Communion, and a number repaired, according to the Lutheran custom, to the communion-rail. All who had come to the church, by no means entered it during this service. Another was to follow, and those who were then standing and gossiping about the door were probably waiting for it. One thing struck me very forcibly as being different from our church usage. People kept coming in during the whole of the service, and a hum of undertoned conversation filled the

church, which must have proved utterly distracting and intolerable to any English preacher.

There is a law in Finland against Sunday trading, but it seems to be a dead letter, for the three shops in Ruokalaks were open, and filled with customers. This Finnish trip was enjoyable and instructive to a degree. It now only remained to make our way back 150 miles to St. Petersburg, which falls to be first noticed in our second chapter.

CHAPTER II.

NORTH RUSSIA, INCLUDING ST. PETERSBURG AND MOSCOW.

THE great empire of Russia has had her seat of government at different cities, during successive periods of her eventful history. These capitals were, in historical order, Novgorod the Great, Kief, Vladimir, and Moscow. Novgorod, the first capital, ten hours' journey from St. Petersburg by rail and river, and due south from it, was the cradle of the Russian empire, the Rurik dynasty having settled there in 862. Kief, a sunny city of the south, standing on the banks of the Dniéper, and, from its sanctity in the eyes of every Muscovite, known by the name of the 'Jerusalem' of Russia, was the second. Vladimir, situated about midway between Moscow and Nijni-Novgorod, and most famous because of the repeated assaults it sustained at the hands of Tartar hordes, was the third. Moscow, situated in the heart of the empire, the city where the individuality of the Slavs can best be seen, the most beautiful, and at the same time, from the point

of ancient and modern history alike, the most interesting and famous of all Russian cities, was the fourth. As every one knows, St. Petersburg, a purely cosmopolitan city, is the modern capital.

A country that has changed its capital so often, might, it will be allowed, do so again. There are many belonging to the Old Russian party who would rejoice to see Moscow reinstated in its ancient place of honour ; and amid the convulsions of empires, the overturning of dynasties, and the alteration in the map of Europe which would necessarily follow—and the newly written page of history proves that all these things are within the bounds of possibility,—should it so happen that Russia could lay her hands upon the coveted capital of the Golden Horn, and make of the glorious temple of St. Sophia—now a Mohammedan mosque, alas ! O shade of John Chrysostom—a Christian church, it might be that the Russian seat of government would be removed from the shores of the Gulf of Finland, where the climate is so unpropitious, to the shores of the Bosphorus, where the pearl of European cities, and the key to two continents, if not even three, is ever likely from this moment to continue an object of ambition, until the weak have finally gone to the wall, and some power of undoubted might and enterprise has taken possession of it. That such a thing is likely, as that Russia should ever have Constantinople for her capital, I am far from saying, and still further from desiring,

while, at the same time, it would perhaps be difficult to deny that Russian statesmanship, devoutly, however quietly, desires such a consummation;¹ but of this I am persuaded, that whatever may be the schemes of diplomacy, and however terrible the clash of arms must be, when nations in a future too near I apprehend to be regarded with any degree of equanimity, battle for the mastery, there is One who sits upon the throne of the Universe, holding in His hands an impartial balance, and who is teaching men still, what every page of the history of the world in the past has taught, that the best motto of kingdoms, kings, and peoples, is just the motto of the city of Carlisle,—‘Be just, and fear not.’

It is exactly one hundred and seventy-five years ago since Peter the Great, desiring to have ‘a window looking out into Europe,’ as he called it, having first dispossessed the Swedes, laid the foundation of St. Petersburg in a marshy region on the banks of the Neva, where the river ran, as it runs

¹ ‘From the foundation of the Russian empire the possession of Constantinople has ever been the steady and unwearied ambition of its rulers,—an ambition which has descended like an heirloom from generation to generation, earnest, unabated, and unchanged. It was in the heart of Peter the Great when he dictated that famous clause in his will which enjoined upon his successors the duty of persistence in this one settled purpose; it was in the heart of Catherine when she caused to be inserted upon the eastern gate of her capital, *Gate of Constantinople*; and ably and resolutely has the system been followed up even to the present hour.’—*From Introduction to ‘The Bosphorus and the Danube,’* by Miss Pardoe. Virtue and Co.

now, in several channels. The city whose foundation this enterprising and undaunted Prince then laid, has now become a vast and magnificent capital, with a population of 766,000. To one visiting such a city for only a few days, if he is desirous to carry away with him a fair and lasting impression of its magnitude and appearance, and feel somewhat at home, when he subsequently wanders through its streets, and visits the various objects of interest of which it boasts, the first and essential requisite is to get a bird's-eye view of it from some commanding eminence. What visitor could form any proper idea of Edinburgh, if he did not first go to Salisbury Crags and the Calton Hill? The glory of ancient and modern Rome would not ravish as it does, if it was not for the view to be had from the Pincian Hill and the dome of St. Peter's. An Englishman might live for years in Venice, and know nothing of the witchery of the Bride of the Adriatic, if he never ascended the Campanile of San Marco. No traveller could have any idea of the charms of Carlisle and its vicinity, who had not on some fine morning, when summer was in the land, stood on the roof of its castled keep, and seen northward the tracery of the Roman wall and the Scottish hills, and eastward the Tyndale fells and Pennine range, and southward the mighty mountain warders which sentinel the Lakes, and westward the silver Solway with its warder Criffel, and landward again the vast Cumberland plain, one of

the largest, as it might be one of the most fertile, in our country, and beneath, and wellnigh all around him, the fair city of the beautiful waters. Nor is it otherwise with the capital of Russia. Nature, indeed, has denied a proud eminence in that land, which is almost an unbroken plain, and where, to the weary eye, a hillock refreshes like a mountain. What Nature has denied, however, art and industry have supplied in the principal cupola of St. Isaac's Cathedral, rising about three hundred feet above the basement, and, with its copper covering, gilded with 185 pounds of gold, glittering like the morning sun as he rises over some mountain-top.

Within twenty minutes after I had alighted at the Hôtel Angleterre, in St. Isaac's Square, I made my way to the top of the Cathedral, accompanied by one of the regular attendants, a middle-aged and much-bemedalled soldier, who had seen upwards of twenty-five years' service. That the view was picturesque, it would not be correct to say ; but that it was imposing and beautiful there could be no question. There was to be seen the mighty Neva, one of the noblest of European rivers, carrying on his broad bosom, and in fourteen different channels, this imperial city, like a bark overladen with precious goods, and seeming to say, as he rolls along in all his might, and pride of undiminished volume, 'I flow from Lake Ladoga: no drought touches me.' Massive quays, which help to confine the river, when, swelled with autumnal rains,

he threatens to inundate the city, the sight of which makes an Englishman proud to think that the magnificent embankment, on one side of the river at least, has taken the place of the muddy and malodorous foreshore of the Thames. Timber-barges and trading vessels, rowing-boats and swift steam-tugs, in such a throng as to suggest the idea that he who can navigate the Neva in safety will never lose his head in the most crowded channel. Bridges, permanent and floating, always crowded, and presenting the visitor with life-scenes nowhere else to be witnessed in St. Petersburg. The great street of the Nevski Prospekt, in many respects the finest in Europe, and which, while it is four miles in length, by one hundred and thirty feet in breadth, abounds in specimens of grand and massive architecture, presenting infinite variety. Five hundred streets, knowing neither lanes nor alleys, where the houses are all of colossal size, with roofs not of slate or wood, but of rolled iron—a Russian specialty, which, painted, as they are, either red or green, give an idea of warmth, not unacceptable in these high latitudes, and besides, give a colouring to the scene in which every artist must revel. Squares and gardens, so vast in size that, in any other country, they might almost be called parks. Churches by the score, or rather by the hundred, nothing particular to look at from the street ; but, as many of them have green, and most of them gilded cupolas, presenting a scene

from the cupola of St. Isaac's, which, when once seen, can never be forgotten. The spire of the Admiralty, somewhat stunted, but still graceful and attractive, and that of the Great Fortress Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, the loftiest in Russia, next to that of Revel, which, as it rises in its gilded glory, and long-drawn-out and lessening proportions, fills the mind with wonder as to how handicraft could produce, what architecture had designed. Palaces and museums, academies and public buildings, all of gigantic size, only disappointing to this extent, that one is puzzled to understand how a nation, that has erected structures so massive, could ever have contracted the taste, which has finished off the fronts, in that land of the north wind, with friable plaster of Paris, coloured only one shade lighter than yellow-ochre, and this more particularly when the granite of Finland was lying at the gate of the capital. Fire towers, girdling the city, intersecting the city, everywhere in the city, from whose lofty galleries the watchmen keep the closest outlook as they pace around them night and day. The equestrian statue of Peter the Great, who bridles in his war-horse on the edge of a mountain of Finnish granite, while its hind feet crush a vast and sinuous serpent, intended to represent the enormous difficulties and obstacles he encountered and overcame; and the immense monolith of red granite, crowned by the figure of an angel and a cross, having its shaft,

eighty feet long, dedicated to the Emperor Alexander the First, and which, as it stands in the Palace square, and has a history of its own, teaches how imperious has been the imperial will of many of the princes, who have kept their Court in the adjacent Imperial residence. The decree was issued that a statue should be erected to the memory of the Emperor, who had both suffered and triumphed in the days when Napoleon was the terror of Europe. The granite column was to be eighty feet in length. So successful were the quarriers, that they obtained a flawless shaft fifteen feet longer than was required. It needs no eye or argument to prove that this additional length would have given to the monument a much more commanding appearance ; but no, the decree had been signed by the Imperial pen, and nothing remained, to the chagrin of successful workmen, and the diminishing of the head of the lions of St. Petersburg, but that all beyond what had been ordered should be cut off. Having spent almost an hour on the top of the Cathedral, drinking in a scene so utterly new, and therefore attractive to an English eye, and making myself acquainted with the topography of the city, with the assistance of map and guide, at last I managed to get down half-a-dozen cork-screw staircases, and cross the leads again, and descend another spiral stair, when, on arriving at the basement, my guide extinguished the light in his lantern, drew himself up *à la militaire*, and prepared

to receive his fee. His willingness to help me had been so manifest, although, alas, the ancient confusion of tongues hampered us to the extent that he could do little more than direct my eye to the different buildings, when I read out their names ; and his patience had been so marked, by allowing me to stay aloft as long as I chose, that I thought he did not deserve less than a rouble. Accordingly I took a note of that value out of my purse, and handed it to him. At the sight of it he snatched it out of my hand, as if afraid that I might alter my mind, his eyes sparkled, and he saluted as if he had had a Russian officer under his care.

Having taken a survey of the city from the top of St. Isaac's, let us pay a short visit to a few of the more famous buildings in the Russian metropolis. The contents of these buildings are rare and splendid to a degree, some of the splendour indeed approaching the barbaric, in the light of eyes chastened and subdued by the more sober splendour of the palaces and galleries of Western Europe. The most famous of these public buildings is the Hermitage, a Gallery and Museum, founded by the Elizabeth of Russia, Catherine the Great, and enlarged from time to time, until now it is a vast building, 515 feet by 375. Its shape is that of a parallelogram, and the rarity and value of the contents of the different collections which are gathered together on two floors, is not to be appraised. The picture-galleries are com-

posed of three celebrated collections, and contain some rare specimens of the different European schools. The Russian school, as represented here, and in the Museum at Moscow, is particularly interesting, because of its youth. It is only about thirty years old ; but during these three short decades, the Russian artists have made marvellous progress. The Rembrandts are so splendid that Professor Blackie, that ardent admirer of everything Scotch, has said, the stranger who visited St. Petersburg without seeing the Rembrandt collection, would be like the foreigner who visited Scotland, but never went through the Trossachs. A copy of his famous 'Anatomical Lesson,' the original of which is at the Hague, is to be found in Moscow. Paul Potter's acknowledged masterpiece, 'The Rural Scene,' and his 'Dog,' scarcely second to it, are in the Hermitage. The Hague collection counts itself rich in having his 'Bull.' Coins, gems, and sculpture, are arranged in appropriate departments. The Kertch collection, abounding in antiquities from the Cimmerian Bosphorus, and attesting the existence of Greek colonies on the northern shores of the Black Sea six hundred years B.C., is only approached, so far as interest and beauty are concerned, by the Etruscan Museum at Florence ; while in the Gallery of the Muses, the collection of Scythian, Siberian, Oriental, and ancient Russian objects of antiquity, is sufficient to drive all the Jonathan Oldbucks of Europe half-crazy.

Every other room in the Hermitage, however, must yield in interest, so far as a foreigner anxious to see and know Russia is concerned, to the gallery known by the name of Peter the Great. This gallery is filled with objects of art and industry illustrative of the life and activity of that wonderful man:—his lathe, and specimens of his turning, his telescopes and mathematical instruments, his innumerable walking-sticks and canes, and especially his long and ponderous iron staff, which he was accustomed to carry about with him, and which, while it speaks of his giant strength and stature,—and a wooden rod which marks his height indicates this last,—suggests the idea, that prince, and general, and peasant, must have been alike to be pitied, when they fell under the displeasure of that intense living autocrat, who was half-crazed, and altogether self-willed. On the top of a press, near a window, there is the effigy of his Dutch housekeeper, who did pretty well as she liked with the man, who did what he pleased with the highest and humblest of his subjects, and not far from it there is a cast of Peter's face, taken while he was yet alive. This cast is remarkable among things that are all remarkable. Peter's long black hair, his bushy eyebrows, his small but turbulent moustache, his prominent eyes, his expanded nostrils, his high cheek-bones, and his firm-set mouth, all indicate him to have been a man possessed of that quality, in which the world-conquering Romans gloried—power.

No one can question the power and will of the man, who was insensible to bodily fatigue, even after the severest and most protracted labours, who in the eyes of his courtiers appeared to be ubiquitous, who set his mind on building a city in a swamp, who draughted 40,000 men annually, from the most distant parts of the empire for several years, and brought them to the banks of the Neva, to drive whole forests of piles into the morass to secure a foundation, and raise embankments to keep out the flood, and who built houses, until he saw his efforts crowned with a growing success. The energy of the man is not to be disputed, who went to Holland and Deptford to learn shipbuilding, that Russia under him might own a navy, and whose few leisure hours, while he rented Evelyn's house, were spent in drinking strong waters, and getting his attendants to wheel him in a barrow through Evelyn's holly hedges, to their great detriment, and the deep and lasting concern of their owner, and who carried matters with so high a hand in his own dominions, that he could say, when he saw a number of men wearing wigs and gowns in Westminster Hall, during his visit to England, and was told they were lawyers, 'Lawyers! why, I have but two in all my dominions, and I believe I shall hang one of them the moment I get home.' On the other side of the Neva from the Hermitage there stands Peter's cottage, the humble house he inhabited when he superintended the

building of his city, and preserved by the nation with the most jealous care,—a natural and a beautiful thing in their circumstances ; while in the fortress there is stored up, ‘out of commission,’ as we should say, the boat which he sailed when constructing his infant navy.

The next great building that claims notice is the Winter Palace, adjacent to the Hermitage, and communicating with it by a gallery. The saloons are all long, lofty, and superb, having magnificent crystal candelabra suspended from the roof. The drawing-room of the Empress seems to give a visitor a peep into fairyland, while the Jewel Room, carefully watched by trusty guardians, presents an array of beautifully-cut and sparkling pure carbon, such as cannot be seen out of that land of diamonds and orders. As in the Hermitage the hall of greatest interest is that of Peter the Great, so in the Winter Palace the room which most impresses the visitor, is the small and humble chamber where Nicholas, Czar and Autocrat of all the Russias, lived, and slept, and died. A grenadier of the Golden Guard of the Palace stands as sentry at the door, and no sooner has the visitor entered the apartment than, as if by an irresistible impulse, every voice is lowered, every footfall is subdued, and the silence resembles that only to be met with in the chamber of death. And indeed it might not inappropriately be termed the chamber of death, for as it was on the morning of

the second of March, 1855, it remains without any alteration up to this hour. The gentle and tender-hearted Alexander could never suffer the dispositions of his father's room to be disturbed. Did I state that this chamber remains without any alteration? Therein I erred, for the little narrow iron camp-bed is tenantless, while there has been added the dead Emperor's mask, taken after death, and rendered by the sculptor's chisel in purest white marble, showing, in its every lineament, the unmistakable features of the house of Romanoff. With these exceptions all remains as it had been. The long grey military cloak lies folded up with soldier-like neatness on the bottom of the bed; sword, cane, and helmet, hang against the wall. The articles of toilet, few in number and camp-like in their simplicity, are in their wonted place. Miniature paintings of his children, and views of his villa at Naples, and of Neapolitan scenery, adorn the walls. The Czar's business-table stands fronting the small window, with everything upon it in the most precise order, while on the blotting-pad there lies the report of the Quartermaster-General on the strength of the household troops, delivered that morning when Nicholas, a weary and broken-hearted man, ceased from mortal troubling. The simplicity is that of the well-ordered barrack-room, and as memories rush into and fill the mind, it is impossible to help regretting that Nature had formed a man, the lord of millions, in a mould

so stern,—Nicholas the First, the cold, haughty, and despotic Emperor. Generals February and March, on whose skill he had relied for driving the Allies out of the Crimea, had indeed, as *Punch* indicated, with an awful and never-to-be-forgotten incisiveness,—incisiveness almost approaching cold-bloodedness, an element rarely entering into any of the compositions and cartoons of our national banterer and satirist,—turned traitors. Ill reports from his armies, following thick upon one another, crushed the spirit of the Emperor, already in failing health, and an acute attack of influenza carried him off. Some men hint that influenza was the ostensible, and poison the real cause of his death. Who can tell? The morning of that second of March dawned on Russia with a dark and frowning countenance, but a new and joyful light soon shot athwart the heavens, for it was before long discovered, when the nation recovered the gift of speech it had wellnigh lost under the imperious sway of Nicholas, that the links forming the iron chain of despotism were broken, never again to be welded. In the great Fortress Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Nicholas lies buried, in the midst of what is already a great and silent congregation, for here, lie all who have reigned in Russia since the foundation of St. Petersburg, with one single exception, together with many members of the Imperial family. Next to him lies his grandson and namesake, the much-lamented Czarevitch, who died at Nice in 1865,

while the latest addition to the Royal Mausoleum is the body of the Grand-Duke Sergius of Leuchtenberg, who received a Turkish bullet through the brain in the Dobrudscha, during the late war.

Nicholas has been gathered to his fathers, and Alexander the Second reigns in his stead. How different the two men! The Russians had a Czar Alexander, whom they call the Great; with one voice they declare that the present Emperor will be known among them in all coming time as Alexander the Good. In the sight of God and man which of these two qualities is the noblest? 'Tis only noble to be good.' Alexander is mild, clement, generous, a lover of peace, and a hater of war. I am aware that the latest events of his reign may appear to belie these words; but those who know him best declare that recent wars have been undertaken sorely against his will, and upon the advice of counsellors who bring a constant pressure to bear upon him. He is adored by his people, who call him their 'Father.' Only so lately as last summer, when an English lady was comforting a peasant-woman who had lost her son in Turkey, she replied, 'Would it not be hard if our Father could not get his children to fight for him when he needs them?' Neither his own people nor we, can fail to hold in high esteem the man who, in the face of stubborn opposition, signalised the beginning of his reign by taking steps for liberating between thirty and forty millions of serfs. His

portrait, which is everywhere, represents him as the much-to-be-pitied subject of a brooding melancholy. Those who have seen him since his return from the late war say he has aged twenty years, while the remark may be heard that, so overweighted has he often felt with the cares of empire, as to have expressed a desire to receive the tonsure and retire to a monastery. Uneasy lies this head that wears a crown.

If the present Czar is beloved, the Czarevitch, the Russian heir-apparent, is not less so. Men whose opinion can be thoroughly relied upon, informed me, once and again, that the life and principles of the Prince were such, as to give them high hopes for the future of Russia, when Alexander, now a fast-aging man, ceases to reign. For the sake of Russia, as well as of Europe, let us hope that these anticipations may be realised to the full. The Prince, with his wife, the sister of our Princess of Wales, is always bent on doing good. Let the following instance of these royal humanities serve as a proof. Two years ago they quietly got up a gigantic Christmas-tree in their palace, sent out a number of servants to fetch in the poorest children they could find, meanwhile having said nothing about their design, and after giving them a grand night, tied bundles of warm clothing on their backs, and sent home the little ones to wondering and delighted parents.

In addition to the Hermitage and Winter Palace, the Academy of Arts, and the Academy of Sciences,

with its Anatomical Museum, and unfossilised remains of the megatherium, brought from Siberia, are well worthy of being visited. The *Gorny Corpus*, or School of Mines, contains some wonderful models of the Siberian mines and manner of washing the ore, and artificial mines also, into whose cavernous recesses you are led by a guide, carrying lighted candles. In this last institution there is a piece of beryl which cost 42,000 roubles, and a huge nugget of gold weighing eighty pounds.

There still remains one place, to which we must pay an evening visit before leaving the public buildings of St. Petersburg. This is the great Cathedral Church of St. Isaac. Standing in one of the largest open spaces in this capital, this Cathedral cannot fail to be admired for its grand proportions and simple architecture, its noble porticoes, and glittering domes, the loftiest of which can be seen afar down the Neva, by the traveller who approaches the Russian capital by the water route. In order to secure a sure foundation for this magnificent ecclesiastical structure, which was commenced in 1819, and took forty years to finish, a whole forest of piles, each of them twenty feet long, was sunk in the treacherous soil, at the cost of £200,000. This precaution, however, would appear to have been insufficient, for never since the Church was consecrated, in 1858, has the scaffolding been removed from every part of the building at once, the work of propping up the yielding

foundations, particularly on the river side, always going on. At present that side is entirely blocked up with timber. The Church cost three millions sterling. It is in the form of a Greek cross, that is, it consists of four equal sides. Each of these possesses a principal entrance, approached by a broad flight of steps of Finland granite, while the peristyles are supported by 112 gigantic polished granite monoliths, sixty feet high, and having a diameter of seven feet. This massive exterior has for its counterpart a splendid and costly interior, which somewhat disappoints because of its sombreness during the day. This gloominess, however, may help to add to its imposing grandeur, when, at some festival, beginning, as is usual in the Russian Church, at evening service, it is brilliantly illuminated with some thousands of candles and tapers. The wealth of malachite and lapis-lazuli with which the Cathedral is adorned would ransom a province. The splendour of the mosaics on the *ikonostas* or screen, recall to remembrance the finest specimens of this work to be found in churches in Italy. On most, if not on all the pillars supporting the roof, numerous holy pictures are suspended, set in *repoussé* work of gold or silver, and before these the worshippers pay their devotions in the most reverential manner. The incessant crossings and genuflections of the members of the Greek Church are astonishing to a Protestant, and must even be surprising in the eyes of members of the Latin Com-

munion. Without saying anything about form and substance in religion, and their fitting and necessary connection to secure an acceptable service, it is right to add, that if a people may be judged from the way in which they discharge their duties in the church, then Russia is among the most religious of nations. The peasants and humble poor are much more attentive to the rites of religion than the upper classes; and to see some poverty-stricken and aged man or woman enter a church, purchase and light a taper, and then go through no end of bodily exercises with the most imposing reverence, is to have the idea conveyed to the mind that their religion alike soothes and strengthens their souls.

One of my visits to St. Isaac's was made at the beginning of one of the feasts of the Church, that of the Festival of the Virgin, and, as I have said, it was night. A perfect blaze of light filled the immense structure. This might be expected in the metropolitan church of a faith which sees in light the pledge of the presence of the Holy Ghost, and adopts flame as the symbol of the continued life of the soul, and the best possible material representation of the spiritual; and accordingly it happens that no baptism, burial, betrothal, or in fact any religious ceremony, takes place in the Greek Church, the Church of Russia, without light or taper. At this service the building gradually filled, the worshippers all standing, for as there are neither pews nor chairs in the Greek Church,

although kneeling and prostration are often resorted to, sitting is a matter of impossibility. The singing was exceedingly fine. In the Russian Church there is no instrumental music, and consequently the choir is generally composed of the finest voices that can be selected. The prayers were chanted, and the deep and sonorous notes of the deacons, when they uttered, as they often did in their Litany, the words '*Gospodi pomilui*,' the Russian equivalent of 'Grant this, O Lord,' only filled the mind with wonder, that the human frame was not rent asunder with the tremendous tension and effort. This feeling of wonder never left me in whatever town or church I was present at service, and it haunts me still. At a portion of the service, the worshippers, with only a few exceptions, high-born dames and gentlemen, officers and common soldiers, medalled popes and Red-Cross sisters newly returned from the seat of war, artisans and sheepskin-coated mujiks, prostrated themselves, the forehead touching the floor, and remained in this lowly attitude for a considerable time. After this, the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, attended by dignitaries of the Church, moved through the crowd, distributing his blessing, followed by the Cathedral attendants, who carried boxes, sealed with the Government seal, soliciting offerings for three objects,—the services of the Church, the poor, and the Red Cross; and then the service, which had lasted upwards of an hour, came to a close.

The St. Petersburg Metropolitan, I understand, is a man but little loved and respected, at least in his private capacity. Last Easter-eve, during the performance of the greatest service of the year, a stone was flung at him by some person in the Cathedral, —who, as generally happens in Russia when such things occur, was never discovered, and he was severely wounded on the head. The affair made a great fuss at the time, being at first regarded as an attack on the Government, as Church and State are essentially one in Russia, and then the rulers solaced their troubled minds with the reflection, that the dastardly assault had something to do with the Metropolitan's private character. Having just spoken of a Russian religious service, I may mention that the religious habits of the people are seen to a very marked degree when they are passing by some famous church or shrine. On the Nicholas Bridge, for example, where there is a famous chapel, at St. Isaac's, and the Kazan Church in the Nevski Prospekt, and still, even more particularly, at the gateway of the Monastery of Alexander Nevski, passers-by, whether on foot or riding in a conveyance, take off their hats, and devoutly cross themselves at least thrice. Almost everything goes in threes in Russia, in honour of the Trinity. This crossing is an elaborate and even a beautiful process.

Campanology is another feature essentially connected with the Russian service, and I got rather more

than enough of it in St. Petersburg, as my hotel looked upon St. Isaac's, being distant from it about forty yards. Great and small, the bells began to ring about half-past four in the morning, and kept on till service commenced at five. Some of these bells are very small—in fact, not so large as house bells,—and the ringers are furnished with an elaborate mechanical apparatus, so that, by using feet and hands at the same time, they may set them all agoing. The Russian bell-metal is famous for its clear and silvery tone, and the sound produced is highly musical.

A visitor to St. Petersburg would commit a great mistake who did not walk through some of the squares, and especially along the great street of the Nevski Prospekt from one end to the other. If this little exercise did nothing more, it would at least furnish him with some idea of the size of the different buildings, and the roominess of the streets. To an Englishman, indeed, nothing is more deceptive than their appearance. You begin to cross a square, and fancy it is small, but by the time you have got to the other side you will wonder how the time has gone. You see a large building some distance down the Nevski Prospekt, perhaps about ten minutes off, you imagine, but sharp walking will not take you to it under half-an-hour. Russia is a country of great buildings, great distances, and, as those who have good cause to know it well, say, 'a country which gives whole mountains of promise with mole-hills of

result.' The Nevski Prospekt is the Regent Street of St. Petersburg ; but besides having its most fashionable mercantile establishments in it, it also contains many notable buildings, such as the Imperial Library, the Grand Opera, the Gostinnoi Dvor, the Kazan Church, which has a façade like that of St. Peter's at Rome, and churches of so many different creeds, that it has been called 'Toleration Street.' The Emperor went to the Kazan Church to return thanks upon his return from the seat of war. It is much better lighted than St. Isaac's, and on several of the pillars there hang the keys of the different cities which have been captured by Russia from time to time.

In the Gostinnoi Dvor, or great bazaar, you may buy everything that humanity needs, from a cradle to a coffin, and, especially, should you be a foreigner—if men speak the truth,—as many stolen diamonds and precious stones, taken out of their settings, as you have a mind for, and all at a very low figure.

It was at one of the noble mansions running at right angles from this street, that I paid a visit to my friend General Sementoffsky, whose acquaintance I had formed some years ago in Germany. When I first called, he and his family happened to be at their country seat, and an old Baltic Province Russian housekeeper, who opened the door on the chain, was most careful to know something about me before she opened it any wider. A short time after, the family returned to town, and the General, with his wife and

daughter, called at my hotel. Upon the rule of cross-purposes it necessarily followed that I was out. My good friend, however, went to the bureau of the *Angleterre*, and left a letter for me, written in English, —the Russian upper classes are all excellent linguists, —which I shall insert here, because it affords a very fair idea of the courtesy and friendship which Russians are capable of showing to an Englishman :—

‘Mr. C. Sementoffsky was very touched with the attention and kind remembrance with which the Reverend James Christie has honoured him. He regrets very much not to have had the opportunity of seeing him himself, and hopes that he will accept his invitation of coming down to dine at his house on Sunday the $\frac{25}{13}$ of August.¹

‘Mr. C. Sementoffsky will be himself at the hotel at three o’clock in the afternoon, and have the pleasure to take the Reverend James Christie to his country house. He wishes to furnish Mr. Christie with letters to some of his good friends in Nijny, who will help him with their indications.’

This kind offer of hospitality I could not accept, as I was leaving for Finland, but I sent a letter to the General, saying, I should do myself the pleasure to call upon my return to St. Petersburg, taking the chance of finding him at home. When I got back, the following letter was awaiting me :—

‘I am exceedingly sorry that your short stay at

¹ The Russian calendar is twelve days behind ours.

Petersburg does not allow me the pleasure of seeing you on Sunday at my country house. I hope you will not fail to call on me on Monday at my town residence, where I will await you at two o'clock, and have the pleasure of shaking you by the hand.'

At the hour appointed I presented myself, and found my friend prepared to receive me, together with a son and daughter. The kindness I received at their hands was very marked. I was furnished with a letter of introduction to a gentleman in Nijni-Novgorod, and hearing that I purposed visiting Kief, General Sementoffsky presented me with a History of the city where Christianity was first introduced into Russia, written by his brother, one of the Professors in the Kief University, and at the same time with an illustrated archæological work, describing the different ecclesiastical structures in the city which was Russia's second capital. When my visit came to an end, I stood up to shake hands, and before I knew, the General was kissing me *à la Russe*. The salutation over, his daughter quietly said, 'That is a way we have in Russia.' There is also *another* way they have in Russia, but I did not know about it then. When describing this incident afterwards to a married Russian lady, she informed me that as the father had kissed me, it would have been in accordance with Russian etiquette for me to have kissed the hand of the daughter. I shall know better another time.

But now, my travelling companion, Captain Rickard, has got done with his lawyers and agents in Petersburg, and as he wants to be off home to Orenburg and the Urals, and I wish to press on, after having seen the capital with might and main, we make for Moscow. The distance between the two great cities is 604 versts, or 403 English miles; a verst is two-thirds of a mile, and the line runs as the crow flies. In this the imperious will of the Emperor Nicholas is to be seen. When the engineers brought him the plans of the projected line, which, like most others, was intended to go as near intermediate towns and the larger villages as practicable, he took a ruler and pencil and drew a line between St. Petersburg and Moscow, thus indicating his pleasure, and as he drew it, so has the railway been made. The consequence is, that the Moscow line passes through only one important town, that of Tver, on the Volga, having a population of 28,000. Nicholas has often been ridiculed for his rigidity on this point, but there are men now, who begin to say that he was not so very far wrong after all,—in fact, only a little before his time. In these days, when time is money, some believe that the best railway policy is to have a direct line between the principal cities, leaving the wants of side towns to be supplied by cheap and easily constructed tramways.

The favourite train for Moscow is that which leaves St. Petersburg at nine o'clock P.M., accomplishing the run in twelve hours. There is also another train

which leaves at nine o'clock A.M., but then it takes twenty-four hours on the road. Time was valuable to us both, but as I was a tourist, and anxious to see the most of the country and people, my companion, with an amount of self-denial and kindness, which it is impossible to appreciate too highly, consented to travel with me by this day train. As for certain satisfactory reasons, third-class travelling in Russia is a matter of impossibility to an Englishman, we travelled second. The fare was only ten roubles, or in English money, according to the present rate of exchange, one pound and tenpence. The rouble at par is worth three shillings and fourpence, but owing to present depreciation it only brings two shillings and a penny. Last year it was down as low as one and ninepence-halfpenny. Russia, Italy, and Austria, are the three paradisiacal countries in Europe for any traveller who wants to make his five-pound notes go as far as possible.

With military promptitude, the train starts that moment the clock strikes, and we settle down, to get as much capital as possible out of the country, our fellow-passengers, and the incidents of the day. And first, what is this universal motion of the hand going on? It is the Russian passengers crossing themselves, an invariable custom, in hopes that the journey may be propitious. And now there comes the conductor of the train, attended by two subordinate guards, to check our tickets. Their dress,

the neatest I saw on any Russian line, consisted of a round black hat, with a deep border of Astrachan fur, a blue surtout buttoned up to the neck, with a bright magenta sash round the waist, terminating in long tassels, blue trousers, and long top-boots three parts up to the knee, and polished till they shone like a mirror. The conductor was getting old, and wore a magnificent grey beard. There is not an English guard who would not give half a year's pay for such a beard, for the sake of the extra tips it would bring. Constructed as the carriages are on the American model, with doors at the end, and a narrow iron platform connecting each of them over the couplings, the guards always keep travelling along the train. Unless you are a very timid passenger, this constant surveillance soon becomes rather annoying, especially to an Englishman, who likes best to be shut into a carriage, and left alone. But we are tourists, and therefore must neither grumble nor refuse to make ourselves all things to all men: the two first articles in the proper tourist's creed. The misery which some men, tourists, as well as those who stay at home, bring upon themselves by getting into the habit of constant grumbling, would be amusing, if it was not contemptible. And who may this tall, sober-faced, and long-haired Russian be, with his long blue coat, black silk neck-tie, and black cloth cap with the large leather peak, fitting close to his head? This is most likely an *old believer*, who thinks every-

thing introduced into the Russian Church since the days of Peter the Great and Nikon, is Antichrist. He stands aloof from the Court and popular party, but his frugality and industry generally leave him a good balance at the banker's. This traveller is probably on his way to the fair at Nijni, where he knows of a good thing. And this gentleman? Oh, he is a young officer fresh home from Turkey, as brown as a filbert, rigged out, brave fellow, in a new uniform by his army tailor at Petersburg—I am sure he must have needed it sadly,—and wearing on his breast the handsome Cross of St. Ann. This decoration is enough to make his fortune for life, seeing it is only bestowed for personal bravery in the field. We bow, and ask to be allowed to look at his decoration, and, blushing like a maiden, he consents. He is as proud of his decoration as his mother has right to be proud of him. And this gentleman in another division of the carriage? This is also an officer; he looks like a well-conditioned major, but how different he is from his young and courteous companion in arms! Captain Rickard addresses him, he answers curtly, and, drawing himself up, lights a papiros, and puffs away like a steam-engine. He would not have done that three years ago, the English were taken to the Russians' bosom then, but now—? O monstrous, green-eyed jealousy! And this comfortable-looking individual who sits opposite myself having by his side a huge bundle, in shape something between a bolster and a

pillow-case? Oh, this is a Russian who intends to journey a long distance, and he carries his pillow with him, like so many of his fellow-countrymen, that when he lays his head on it, he may sleep the more comfortably. And this other traveller, a German all over? Well, unless we are profoundly mistaken, he never knew the meaning of the words 'uncommercial traveller.'

By the time we have taken a good survey of our fellow-travellers, we are far beyond the huge cabbage-gardens in the environs of Petersburg, where that homely and wholesome vegetable is grown wholesale, for the purpose of making for the capital the famous soup, which all the subjects of the Czar love so well, and soon we stop at a station. Two things here attract our attention. There is a company of cuirassiers of the Guard drawn up along the platform, and among the officers, we pounce upon our tall young friend Sementoffsky, the eldest son of our St. Petersburg acquaintance, whom we had never hoped to see again, after our month's genial fellowship at Schwalbach three years ago;—but, interjects Captain Rickard, 'everybody meets everybody in Russia.' And here is a long carriage absolutely filled with peasant women, carrying away infants from the St. Petersburg Foundling Hospital to nurse in their village homes. The tiny anatomies are clean and comfortably dressed, and the foster-mothers have brought from the hospital small bundles of spare

clothing for them. Poor and forlorn little buds of humanity, it is most likely 50 per cent. will die within twelve months, while only one-fourth will arrive at boyhood. In St. Petersburg, 42 per cent. of the children in all classes of society die before they are two years old. People say climate and carelessness are accountable for this. In our mining and manufacturing districts are we any better? Let statisticians and medical officers of health reply! At a number of the stations the peasant women ran up to a huge water-bucket, generally to be seen standing on Russian platforms, to fill their water-bottles, and their humble appearance conveyed to the mind the idea, that from whatever homes, exalted or lowly, the foundlings had originally come, their subsequent lot, should they survive, would be a hard one. The boy foundlings are generally drafted into the army. The two great foundling hospitals in Russia are at St. Petersburg and Moscow. That at Moscow is the most famous, containing, as it does, about three thousand little inmates, and, as I hoped to visit it, I had not gone to that at St. Petersburg. To my profound chagrin, however, I found upon arriving in Moscow, that it was closed to visitors, as the children were out in the country for summer nursing. Of course, foundlings were being taken in every day, but there was no admission. As I have stated, this was a great disappointment, but the fact of having seen something of the foundlings and foster-mothers dur-

ing a whole day's journey, blunted its edge somewhat. No doubt these institutions were intended to serve a benevolent purpose, but now it is greatly abused. People say that the morals of all the surrounding villages have deteriorated because of their existence, and it is one of the commonest of things for a young mother to place her infant in the hospital, and then apply five minutes after for a child to take out to nurse, in hopes that she may be allowed to select her own offspring, and be paid four and sixpence per month by the Government for nursing it. More than two thousand women have recourse every year to the secret maternity wards, and the hospital admits annually about thirteen thousand children. The only questions asked are, 'Has it been baptized?' and, if so, 'What is its name?' If it has not received the initiatory rite of Christianity, it is baptized next day, getting, for its Christian name, that of the Saint of the day, and for its surname, that of the priest who performs the ceremony, with the addition of the well-known Russian suffix 'of.' It then has a number tied round its neck, and the bearer of the child, who receives the number on a receipt, may visit it at any time, or even claim it, as long as it is under ten years of age.

The whole of the country between St. Petersburg and Moscow is flat and uninteresting in the extreme. The railway crosses, what the map of Russia calls the Valdai Hills, in which the rivers Volga, Dwina, and Volkhof take their rise. We look out for these hills,

but everywhere there is a plain as flat as a pancake. The land is only partially reduced from a state of nature, and is poorly cultivated. This seems surprising, when it lies between two vast cities, and the thought is driven home, 'How does it come that Russia, so desirous to press her civilisation home upon other people, does not first make a model of her own country?' The reason perhaps is this, that the deep-soiled black-earth country still remains so unexhausted, that extensive tillage in a comparatively barren district would not be remunerative. Another half-century will right matters in this extensive tract of country between the capital and Moscow. Fir, birch, and the lime-tree are the principal features of forestry, and most useful are the last two to the ingenious peasants. It may be interesting that I should indicate the uses to which they are put in different parts of Russia.

The birch-tree serves the Russian in twelve several ways. It supplies him with fuel. It constructs his carts or telegas. Thin splints, held at an acute angle, serve instead of candles, and, when kept snuffed, afford a good light. Tubs, and all kinds of kitchen utensils are made from it. It yields tar, which is used instead of oil in smearing cart and carriage wheels. It refines the spirits of the country. It cures leather and all sorts of skins. It smears boots and every kind of harness. When tapped in spring it yields a sap which makes an effervescing drink, a

great deal better than bad champagne. In bad seasons its leaves are used as food for cattle. The twigs, made into scrubs, are used to scrub the bath, and the human body in the bath, and as birch twigs have an ancient renown for birching naughty boys in England, I suppose we may take it for granted they possess the same virtue in Russia, with perhaps this addition, that there, even still, they may birch naughty men.

In some parts of Russia the lime-tree is not much less utilised. Its leaves are chewed for food. The thick outer bark is used as roofing material. The inner bark is worked up into sacks. The fibre makes ropes. It is also manufactured into shoes. These are seen everywhere. The hollowed stem is converted into a bee-hive, and is hung high up on a tree, to keep it out of the way of the bear, which has a peculiar weakness for honey.

The previous night saw the beginning of the great Feast of the Virgin, as we have already mentioned, and this is a holiday. Accordingly, at most of the stations we see crowds of the country people in gala attire, especially the women. One station is well-nigh invaded with young women. Some of them are fresh and good-looking; all are stout. Many wear antiquated silk dresses, with the 'waist only a little beneath the armpits; golden earrings, encircled by a transparent pocket of pearl-like glass beads, draw down the lobe of the ears to an amazing degree; and

a net, woven with the same beads, adorns the hair. Nor are young men wanting. This could not be expected, even in Russia, although it is said, after the marriage has taken place, that the wife loves her husband just in proportion as he beats her, or, to put it in a milder form, that if he did not chastise her occasionally, she would fancy he had withdrawn his love. On this day the young fellows sport gaudy red shirts, and their best top-boots. In England, when a man has a shirt, he generally wears it within his unmentionables. In Russia they do differently, among the peasant class. The shirt is worn over the unmentionables, and the unmentionables within the boots. The scene is gay enough within the station, but it is nothing to what is going on outside; dance and song—song, O so soft!—are the order of the day; and the Russians are very musical. The peasant's melody has a strange witchery about it. What can it be? It is the plaintiveness which slavery gives to the human voice, whether in speech or in song; and although the Russian serfs are now freed, the voice has not yet acquired the robustness of that of the free-born.

Here are the words of two Russian songs. The first is called 'The Troika.' The troika is a Russian conveyance drawn by three horses, generally famous for their speed. The Valdi bell is that which is fastened to most Russian conveyances in the country. These bells are made in the villages

among the Valdai Hills. The Yimchic is the driver, and the subject of the song is his sorrow, at having been sent by his master and owner far away from the girl he loves.

THE TROIKA.

THE troika drives a quiet pace,
On even road at dead of night,
The Valdi bell alone doth tell
Its near approach, though not in sight.
The Yimchic, roused before the dawn,
Feels saddened in the dull light,
He tries to raise a song in praise,
Of village maidens' eyes so bright.
O those blue eyes, those eyes so blue,
They've broke a gallant spirit's ease,
And the oppressor, cruel ever,
Has dared to sunder hearts like these.
Tear-drops are falling from his eyes,
Upon his coat, like drops of rain,
But he brushes off the feeling soft,
And the troika drives full speed again.
O those blue eyes, those eyes so blue,
They've broke a gallant spirit's ease,
And the oppressor, cruel ever,
Has dared to sunder hearts like these.

The next song is very different in character and rhythm. It is called 'The Red Seraphan,' and represents a little controversy between mother and daughter, on the all-absorbing topic of matrimony. The daughter thinks 'she's o'er young to marry yet'; the mother wants, mother-like, to see her daughter comfortably settled in life :—

THE RED SERAPHIAN.

DAUGHTER.

SEW not for me, mother dear, a scarlet seraphan,
Waste not money, mother dear, on such a useless plan ;
Young I am to have my hair in double plait entwined,
Bid me still my raven locks with ribbons gay to bind.
Cover not my thoughtless head with matron's kerchief grave,
Teach thou not my merry eyes a husband's smile to crave.
What is like to maiden life? Why then to change consent?
If to-day I haste to wed, to-morrow I'll repent.
Maidenhood's bright liberty is more to me than all—
This denied, life's richest joys upon my heart will pall.

MOTHER.

Listen, darling, daughter mine, lay obstinacy by,
Foolish as thou art and young, thy mother's counsel try.
Shall thy lifetime, like a bird's, be tuneful every hour?
Wilt thou like the butterfly flit on from flower to flower?
Soon the rosy bloom of youth will fade from off thy face,
Even the pure domestic joys will bring thee weariness.
We the elders now enjoy such pranks as thine, my child,
Thinking how we once were young, ay, sportive too, and
wild.

As you say, I sang, my dear, for I too once was young,
And the words I sing to you, to me too once were sung.

The buffets at the principal railway stations in Russia are all well appointed, and everything that is delicate and in season may be had at a moderate charge. Among the humbler classes the favourite dish appears to be a bouillon, composed of cabbage, with large pieces of ham and beef floating in it. This is served from a huge caldron placed on the platform, at the rate of five kopecks per each good-sized Japanese bowl. It is alike appetising and

nourishing. Very little 'vodka,' or spirits, seems to be consumed, the universal drink being 'tchai,' or tea, which is served up in tumblers, and has a most delicious flavour. Milk and cream are but seldom used with it, a slice of lemon being preferred. The Russians are fond of sweet things; but they do not as a rule put the sugar into the tumbler with the tea. They generally place a large lump between their teeth, and suck the tea through it. Although provisions are thus cheap and excellent at the railway buffets, many Russians carry their own provender and tea-apparatus along with them. They can get their bright tin kettle filled with boiling water at any station for ten kopecks, and this makes a tea brew which will serve for four or five hours, and then they open up their stores, and eat, and drink, and sleep, and drink, and eat, and sleep again. The floor of the third-class buffets is generally littered with peasants, who will transport themselves and their belongings to the station, some hours before the train is due—half-a-dozen hours, or even half a day for that matter, is of no moment to the Russian peasant,—and, lying down, they go off at once fast asleep. The capabilities for sleeping, developed and carefully cultivated by these rough, clumsy, and sheepskin-coated Muscovites, would surprise even the seven sleepers. When the train arrives, the scout of the gang gives the signal, and then, big Slavs and little Slavs, young Slavs almost hidden out

of sight by the long coat, and old Slavs wrinkled and lean, shuffle off to the carriage, making the platform re-echo with the hollow sound made by their ill-fitting boots. After any amount of pushing and shoving, they manage to get stowed away on board, and then go off to sleep again till the journey is ended.

These railway experiences cause the time to pass very rapidly, and almost before we know it, we find ourselves close to Moscow.

The moment we alighted at the station in this famous city, we witnessed a scene which provoked uncontrollable laughter. It was the gesticulation and vociferation of the drosky-drivers. This description of mankind possesses an unmistakable individuality in every country, but the Russian cabmen as a class, and the Moscow brethren in particular, are quick and wily in the extreme. In most Russian towns, as in Moscow, there is no fixed tariff. Cabby generally asks as much again as he will ultimately consent to take, and those who know his peculiarity, name the sum they will give, and quietly walk away, when in most instances he will drive up, and ask the person whose offer he has rejected with every display of scorn only a few seconds before, to jump in. The scene at Moscow was as follows :—The droskies were drawn up in a long line, the drivers leaning over the back of their uncomfortable conveyances, offering to thrust their metal badge into the hands of any pass-

ing traveller, and yelling meanwhile as if Bedlam had been let loose. One youth in particular excited my wonder and laughter. He was short in stature, and wore a cabman's hat ever so much too big for him. He succeeded in bringing several passengers up to his conveyance, but evidently no fare would please him. Still he shouted, but got no patron, and at last, flinging down his badge, he waved his hands in the air like the sails of a windmill, and twisted them all over his body, as if a legion possessed him, and writhed, and very probably used strong language. I think it was a Frenchman who first uttered the now famous saying, 'Scratch a Russian, and you will find a Tartar.' This Moscow cabby did not even need to be scratched to show what was in him. Getting into a hotel omnibus, we drove to the 'Slavianski Bazar,' the great Slav hotel of this great Slav city, in which everything, from the costume of the hall-porters, to the lavatory fountains in the bedrooms, is after the old Russian pattern. To say it was comfortable would be superfluous. It was just what first-class hotels are everywhere; and although guide-books and travellers warn you against hotels in Russia, I neither suffered any annoyance, nor was subjected to any extortion here or elsewhere. I think it right to say this, because the character of the hotels you must put up at generally makes a tour either enjoyable, or a vexation and a worry.

We are now in Moscow, that semi-Eastern city,

which deserves the name of a capital. Here we are indeed on Russian ground, and among the Russians proper. St. Petersburg stands on soil once belonging to Finns and Swedes ; the territory around Moscow, since historic times at least, never belonged to any save the Russians. In St. Petersburg, one out of seven of the inhabitants is a German, while there are a considerable number of English and French, and more of the former than the latter ; there are Germans and other foreigners also among the 612,000 inhabitants of Moscow, but they are only a sprinkling. Slavism, as it ought to be in such a city, is supreme. To visit modern Moscow is to be satisfied as with a great joy, and to remember a little of its ancient history and fortunes, is only to have that joy enhanced. I have used the word ‘ancient,’ and that advisedly, for owing to the almost entire destruction of the city, not including the Kremlin, in 1812, when Napoleon’s evil star conducted him thither, it has been so entirely rebuilt, and in many instances, remodelled, as to justify the statement that, in Moscow, ‘ancient’ comes down to yesterday. St. Petersburg is a modern city, and knows little or nothing of the vicissitudes of empire. Moscow boasts of a long, and noble, and tragic history. Founded in the twelfth century, it became the capital of Muscovy in the fourteenth ; thrice was it taken and ravaged by the Tartars, on the first occasion under Tamerlane, and on the last, three hundred years ago, under unutterable circum-

stances of horror, for while the city itself was reduced to ashes, 100,000 persons perished in the flames and by the sword. A century ago the plague converted it into a city of the dead, and in 1812, by what some call an act of cowardice, but, as others think, by the grandest sacrifice ever made to national feeling, the inhabitants of Moscow gave up their ancient, holy, and beautiful city to the flames, that by doing so they might help to arrest the progress of the ruthless invader. Every European History gives an account of the burning of Moscow, when Napoleon approached its gates, so that all I need say on this point is, that, after having removed the archives, ancient manuscripts, principal treasures of the monasteries, the contents of the Sacristy of the Patriarchs, and the three holy images of the Virgins of Iberia, Vladimir, and Smolensk, in six hundred carts, the city was left to its fate. No sooner had the majority of the terrified inhabitants fled beyond the gates, the sick carried on the backs of the strong, and mothers pressing their infants to their bosom in the frenzy of terror, while those who could walk were fastened to their sides, than Napoleon entered the Kremlin, on the 15th of September, amid every circumstance of solemnity and military pomp. And then began the destruction of the city by fire. By the orders of the military governor, the malefactors were released from their dungeons, and instructed to apply the torch. This they did in eleven places, among the oil and

drysalters' stores, and for three days the fire burned with terrible fierceness, until the greater part of the city was destroyed. After staying in the Kremlin for thirty-four days, Napoleon left it, only to retreat, and leave behind him on Russian plains, a vast, brave, and much-enduring army, to be decimated by the spears of Cossacks, and finally overwhelmed by the un pitying rigour of a Russian winter. But Moscow, which had never capitulated, soon rose from her ashes, no trace of that terrible conflagration remains to be seen, and she is now a much fairer, although perhaps a less picturesque city than she ever was before. Except in the vicinity of the Kremlin, and between it and the '*Kitai gorod*' or Chinese town, the business part of the city, the houses are not nearly so closely built as in St. Petersburg. Large plots of ground are attached to many of them, there are numerous open spaces and gardens, and you would almost say that Moscow was '*rus in urbe.*' Its circumference is upwards of twenty miles. As the centre of the Russian railway system, although it has always been the emporium of Russian trade, it is becoming more of a commercial and manufacturing city than ever. It boasts of having 550 manufacturing factories of different descriptions, while it brings annually within its walls, goods of the aggregate value of fourteen millions sterling.

The first place in Moscow to which the visitor goes, is of course the Kremlin, and once there, he

ascends the tower of Ivan the Great, a remarkable structure of five stories, four of which are octagonal in shape, while the fifth and highest is cylindrical. Once on the top, the scene that fills the eye and soul baffles all or any description. Indeed, one of the first feelings that comes over the spectator is that of fear lest the memory of the beauty and wonder of St. Petersburg should be destroyed. Genoa is called the City of Palaces, Moscow may be called the City of Domes, all of them either gilded or gaily painted. Men who know India say that out of Delhi, no such scene of enchanting beauty is to be witnessed in the world. You walk round and round the tower, and everywhere it is the same,—domes, domes succeeding domes. Cathedrals, monasteries, convents, parish churches, chapels,—there are 345 of these buildings in all, and while almost every one is surmounted by a dome, scores of them have three and four each, and, in the case of these, the most important ecclesiastical structures, as gold and silver chains hang from one dome to another, you might fancy you were in dreamland, and in the city of Haroun Al-Raschid. Yes, it is a fairy scene. From most points of the compass, as wide as the eye can reach, the many-gardened city stretches far away. Is this Babylon in miniature? we ask ourselves. The Moskwa, a shining river, rising in the morasses of the province of Smolensk, flows through the city at our feet. Beyond it, and across a plain, there rise the Sparrow

Hills, where the French soldiers first saw the great capital of the north, after their weary march from Smolensk, and where, when they saw the domes glittering in the sun, and heard their Emperor say, 'All that I give you,' they shouted 'Moscou !' 'Moscou !' with a joy as great as that of the survivors of the Ten Thousand, who, after their long retreat, shouted 'Θάλασση !' 'Θάλασση !' as soon as they came in sight of the resounding ocean.

There lies the Kremlin, the fortress of Moscow, with all these vast and varied buildings within its walls,—monastery, nunnery, arsenal, palace, chapels, churches, and superb cathedrals, filled with treasures of inconceivable value : the Kremlin, the heart of Moscow, as Moscow is the big heart of Russia. When St. Petersburg speaks, men may listen or not, just as they please ; when Moscow raises its voice, every Slav in Muscovy lends an attentive ear. Because of this great influence possessed by Moscow, the Romanoffs, the Russian Court, and military party, dislike the city utterly. The Kremlin is surrounded by high walls, upwards of 7000 feet in circumference, and crowned with battlements after the Italian style of architecture. The walls are pierced by five gateways. The first and greatest, the 'Porta Sacra' and 'Porta Triumphalis' of Moscow, is that known by the name of 'Spaski,' or Redeemer. Over it there hangs a picture of the Redeemer of Smolensk, and while all the orthodox uncover and cross themselves

when passing through it, visitors, and persons holding another faith, are expected to imitate them, at any rate as far as the uncovering goes. I did this last, on the principle that it cannot be right, under any circumstances, to wound the feelings of a host, so long as conscience does not say 'nay.' I need hardly add, however, that I invariably uncovered when passing through the 'Spaski' gate, not because I had any sentiment of reverence for the 'holy picture,' but because I respected the custom and wish of the Russians. The other gates also possess peculiar virtues in the eyes of Russians. Immediately within the walls there is first a nunnery, and then a monastery. In this last building I saw the monks one morning at breakfast, and heard them say, or rather chant, prayers, when it was over. At the foot of the Ivan Tower there lies the 'Tsar Kolokol,' or king of bells. It has had a chequered career, and 150 years ago, when it had its last great fall during a fire, a huge piece was broken off it, which, from its massiveness, gives some little idea of the immense size of this bell-king. The weight of the bell is 444,000 pounds, its height 26 feet 4 inches, circumference 67 feet 11 inches, and the weight of the broken piece is eleven tons, with a height of seven feet.

The palace is vast in size, magnificently furnished, and filled with art treasure. The lofty doors by which one saloon communicates with another are of

wonderfully fine work, and, the attendants tell you, were all made in Russia. Connoisseurs in wood-work say, however, that though they were no doubt made in Russia, it is most likely they were made by English workmen. Several of the halls are known by the names of the different great Russian orders, such as Alexander Hall, Hall of St. Andrew, St. Catherine, St. Vladimir, etc., and the painted walls, drapery, and coverings of the chairs, correspond with the colour of the ribbons of these orders. From the Red or Beautiful Staircase, which is only used on great occasions, the Czars in olden time used to allow their subjects to see 'the light of their eyes,' and a terrible 'light' that must often have been. At least it was so in the case of John the Terrible, that man of monstrous cruelty, who here thrust his pointed staff through the foot of the trusty messenger of one of his princes, and the valiant leader of his armies. This prince, fearing an unjust death at the hands of Ivan, fled to the Polish camp, and sent him a letter, in which he exposed the crimes and atrocities of his reign. In his frantic rage, John treated the messenger as I have stated, and leaned on the stick while he read the letter, the sufferer meanwhile standing motionless and silent, and enduring awful agony, till the Czar got to what was to him the bitter end. This same tyrant killed his son with another stick, which is still preserved in the house of the Romanoffs. It is said he repented of his evil deeds before he

died, and after giving large sums to monasteries, assumed the tonsure in his declining days. John the Terrible, and his young murdered son, lie together in one of the cathedral churches of the Kremlin.

The cathedrals in the Kremlin are magnificent beyond compare, not so much because of their structure, as from their wealth of adornment in gold, silver, and all manner of precious stones. In that of the Assumption, the Emperors are crowned, or rather crown themselves, and having done so they enter the innermost sanctuary, and taking from the altar the elements of the bread and wine, they administer the Coronation Communion to themselves. The Czars of Muscovy are kings and priests at one and the same time. In the Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, there are the tombs of forty-five princes who reigned before Peter the Great. It is thus the ancient, as the Fortress Church of St. Peter and St. Paul at St. Petersburg is the modern, royal Russian mausoleum. There are four of these splendid cathedrals in the Kremlin, and all of them were more or less abused by Napoleon's troops during the brief period of French occupation. They stabled their horses, and stored wood, and wine, and food in them, and, before leaving, stole what they could in the way of gold and precious stones. They got so much of these, that perhaps, as it was in the days of Solomon, silver was nothing accounted of.

After Napoleon had quitted the Kremlin, the

rumour spread abroad that one of the cathedrals had been mined and charged with gunpowder, the mine being so arranged that, when the door was opened it would go off, and convert the whole of the Kremlin into a ruin. Nothing daunted, the Moscow Metropolitan summoned his clergy to follow him, that they might chant a *Te Deum* in the church for their deliverance. The procession was formed, and as they marched through an awed and terrified throng, they sang the grand words, which have so often nerved God's people to raise their banners, and in His name to do exploits, which the Scottish moorlands often listened to when persecution dogged the steps of the Covenanters, and which Oliver Cromwell chanted, as he paced up and down the shores of the German Ocean on the night before the battle of Dunbar: 'Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered: let them also that hate Him flee before Him.' Happily their worst anticipations were not realised.

The house of the Romanoffs is well worthy of being visited, showing, as it does, the simple manner in which this once priestly but now royal family was wont to live. One of the most wonderful and interesting sights in the Moscow Museum is the Ethnological Collection—figures in life-size, correctly modelled from the human body, and dressed in the characteristic costumes of the Russian peasantry, and so placed as to represent the various races inhabiting Russian soil. There are here Finns,

Tartars of the Volga, and Tartars of the Crimea, Calmucks and Circassians, Kirghizes and Tchermesses, and all the many-tongued and different-featured tribes who pay tribute to the Russian Cæsar. In one of the rooms, the figures of the Slav races not subject to Russia are arranged. They were first exposed to the public gaze at the Moscow Exhibition in 1867, and the sight of them gave rise to much apprehension on the part of many-peopled Austria.

CHAPTER III.

EAST RUSSIA AND THE VALLEY OF THE VOLGA.

EVERY one has heard, and most people have read, about the great Russian fair at Nijni-Novgorod, and there are few travelling Europeans who happen to be in Moscow between the middle of July and the middle of September, the eight weeks during which the greatest amount of business is transacted at it, who do not contrive to pay it a visit. Nowhere else in Russia can a better insight be had, not only into the manners and peculiarities of the frontier populations of that great empire, and into the costumes and commodities of non-Russian Easterns and Westerns—among whom a chance and rarely 'cute 'heathen Chinee' may now and then be discovered—but likewise into the commercial enterprise of the Russians proper, whose merchants betake themselves thither from every part of the country, and who, although they may scarcely prove a match for the above-mentioned 'Chinee,' are still so sharp that, while they

are willing enough to sell the skin before the bear is killed, they will certainly not purchase it until it has become the spoil of the hunter. It was my great good fortune to visit this fair.

I had just returned from a hard day's sight-seeing at the monastery of Troitsa, forty-five miles distant from Moscow, and, in the noble dining-room of the greatest national hotel in all the Russias, the Slavianski Bazar, taken my seat by the side of the large and musical fountain playing in the centre of the room, in whose waters sturgeon and sterlet were swimming, ready to be fished out with a net by a Tartar waiter, and cooked, for the delectation of the first dainty epicure who took a fancy to this costly dish, when my tall travelling companion, Captain Rickard, a ruddy and unmistakable Englishman, came up to me saying, 'Well, it is hard work doing business in Moscow at present, for half of the warehouses are shut up and their owners off to the fair, but at last I have managed to sell all the copper our mines in the Urals will yield for the next six months, and I am ready to start with you for the East by to-night's express.' It did not take long to discuss a simple dinner, and after half-an-hour's siesta, a thing a traveller can very ill afford to do without, if he is to retain his power of observation, we had our effects put together, paid our bill, got our passports from the manager—persons living in Russia must carry their passports when they travel in that country as

well as foreigners on a visit—and, escorted by two porters, dressed in the Slav costume of their order—shining top-boots, a blue buttoned-up surtout, and a high cloth hat, set all round with the stars of peacocks' feathers—we mounted one of the hotel droskies, drawn by an entire black horse as wild as a steed of the Ukraine, and were hurried off at a tremendous pace to the railway station. Only once did we stop, for a few minutes, just as we had done when driving from the Hôtel Angleterre at St. Petersburg to the station for Moscow ; the reason for doing so, however, was very different in the one case from the other.

The reason for the halt on the banks of the Neva was a matter of wardrobe, that of the temporary stoppage in the holy city of holy Russia was a matter of mental ammunition. As my travelling companion was a nabob down in Orenburg, it was essential for him to be unexceptionable in his attire, a point on which the upper classes in Russia will admit of no exception, and accordingly, when leaving the metropolis, he had to call at the fashionable tailor's, to see that his winter orders were being properly attended to. The name of this famous St. Petersburg professor of the sartorial art was no doubt somewhat singular ; but still it was admirably adapted to represent his skilful and necessary handicraft—it was Corpus. But Captain Rickard was no mere tailor's block or Beau Brummel ; he

was a literary man and a gentleman of high culture, keeping himself up, amid Eastern solitudes and endless business engagements, in the latest and best English literature, and thus it was that our drosky-driver was bid draw up sharp in the streets of Moscow, that the Captain might give his bookseller a last order during the present visit. And here I may remark, that when our fellow-countrymen living in Russia want English books, quarterlies, and newspapers, it is necessary to order them through a Russian bookseller, otherwise they will hardly ever be allowed to cross the frontier. When I left for Russia, I gave orders that the local newspapers were to be sent after me through the Post-office, to different towns on my route, but never yet did I get a single copy. The censorship of the press is exceedingly strict. I happened to be in St. Petersburg when General Mezentsew was assassinated, and for a week after that tragedy had happened, there was not a day, on which one of the columns of the German newspapers which referred to the social condition of Russia, was not erased by the censor's order, before these journals were allowed to be circulated in the capital.

The night express between Moscow and Nijni, and *vice versa*, is one of the best appointed in the empire, and well it may be. It is invariably crowded during the season of the fair. Moscow, the great permanent commercial centre, and Nijni, which is

galvanised into a temporary and frantic state of activity, may be said never to be off the rails in way of correspondence for eight weeks, and the great merchant princes and merchants, without whom Russia would be a much more left-handed power than she is even now, with all her commercial depression, travel by it, for now, if ever during the year, time is money. And yet this fast train takes thirteen hours to cover 410 versts, or 273 English miles. Starting at either end of the line at 8.30 P.M., you arrive at the other at 9.30 A.M. This seems slow work to us, who are accustomed to the North-Western express; but the Russians, to whom, under ordinary circumstances, it is all one whether they arrive at their destination to-morrow or the day after, speak of this train and its speed with bated breath, and as soon as the engine whistles and moves off, they cross themselves with more than ordinary frequency and impressiveness, meanwhile breathing the prayer that the journey may be accomplished without accident. The line runs through the province and town of Vladimir. The town of Vladimir is now a great cotton-manufacturing centre, and, as we indicated in our last chapter, it was the third of Russia's five capital cities in the order of historical succession. The province is one of the richest in Russia for agricultural produce and manufactures. From this province is drawn the far-famed regiment of the same name, whose men did

such good service to Russia during her desperate and unsuccessful struggle with the Allies in the Crimea.

When the rosy morning broke, we found ourselves being hurried through a fertile and interesting country, thickly dotted with comfortable and prosperous-looking country villages, and here and there a church, whose gilded domes glittered in the fresh glory of the rising sun. It was the middle of harvest, and thus early, all who could bend the back, and use their hands in husbandry, were far afield,—the women, bare-legged and bare-footed, reaping, the men either ploughing the land whence the harvest had been gathered, or sowing rye, in due season to be converted into the black bread of the country. The modern history of this fertile district is exceedingly interesting. Until the time of the emancipation of the serfs, all the land in the direction of the Volga was one unbroken forest, yielding of course hardly any return, or most likely none at all, to the proprietors, but now, since the communal system has been introduced alongside the act of liberation, and each male peasant has his allotment of so many acres, the forest has almost entirely disappeared, the tree-roots have been stubbed, and loaded and golden plenty, in average years, both beautifies the landscape, and gladdens the hearts of these humble and incessant toilers. It is impossible not to be intensely interested, when we are informed, on good

authority, of these facts—facts which hold good in all parts of Free Russia, as well as in the watershed of the Volga,—because they serve to dispossess the mind of ideas, which a class of writers had carefully instilled, or at any rate attempted to do so. Before emancipation became a fact practically worked out, there were those who prophesied that the peasants, as soon as they found themselves free, and with land of their own, would degenerate into chronic idleness, and become as notorious for their sloth, as the negroes in the West Indies, after they were liberated by England. After the emancipation, there were certainly not a few of the late serfs, who, in their ignorance and simplicity, and rejoicing in their newly-acquired liberty, seemed to think that, freed from the dread of the knout, life was to be one long holiday, and their example only gave redoubled vigour to the vaticinations of the grumblers, that the whole thing was an utter failure, and that the empire was going—‘to the dogs, sir. Yes, sir, to the dogs.’ It is so very easy for some minds to lay hold on an exceptional instance, and raise it to the height of an eternal principle. A very short time, however, sufficed to disabuse the minds of the peasants of all their Utopian fancies, and, settling down under the pressure of a blessed necessity, they began to work and improve their position, and they still work, and work better with every added year of liberty, and, uncouth though they look, and uncultured and unpolished

though they are, there are but few of the many millions to whom Alexander the Second granted the priceless boon of freedom, who do not know what the human body ought to do during a day's work, and who are not as well acquainted with the value of a rouble, and of untiring industry, as the most careful and industrious free-born Englishman; or, to alter the figure, as we are writing about Russia, as the acutest Finns in Helsingfors and Abö, who were glad enough to construct torpedoes to blow up the Turkish ironclads on the Danube, but would not give one penny towards the purchase of the famous six cruisers, which were to sweep off the face of the deep, the unnumbered fleets of British merchant ships. Those who know what human nature is, need never be surprised that when the universal aspiration of the heart after liberty is attained to, and the act of manumission is passed, which secures to the once down-trodden slave the inalienable right of every mother's son, whatever race he may belong to, or whatever tongue he may speak, a season of licence should succeed; but at the same time, those who know human nature best, are well aware that after such a season, at the longest a short one, the God-given manhood will assert its right and supremacy, and convert the inert, dreamy, and ignoble slave into a man, with all the aspirations, and hopes, and joys of a man—a man who knows what are the duties and responsibilities of men, and with whom it will go

hard indeed, if he does not improve by his ever-expanding hopes and ever-widening opportunities. Between the liberated English slave, and the liberated Russian serf there was this difference: the English slave secured his liberty at once, and had no special tax laid upon him which should remind him of his former bondage. The Russian serf also secured his liberty at once, but upon the introduction of the communal system of landholding, in which every male has an indefeasible right to a certain portion of land, a tax was laid upon the commune, for the period of fifty years, that the landed proprietors and former serfholders might secure a certain amount of compensation for the loss they had sustained. It is most likely that a good deal could be said for such an arrangement, and just as likely that a great deal could be said against it; but from all I could learn, the arrangement has produced no profound dissatisfaction. The serfs have been liberated now for sixteen years, and all is working well. May it do so till the fifty years have run, introducing into that vast and mighty country an endless jubilee, in which Russia's patient, gentle, and hard-toiling sons of the soil, shall rejoice in the possession of the threefold blessing—manhood, and manhood's rights, and manhood's possessions! It cannot be that Russia will ever allow the name and memory of Alexander the Second, the good and generous Czar, to be forgotten,

who, in the liberation of his serfs, did so much to bring his country out of the depths and darkness of barbarism, and place her alongside those nations which form the van of civilisation and empire. England, America, and Russia, three countries intensely democratic, as those who know the people's pulse best are well aware, although two of them have a form of government most opposed to such an order of things, have many things to be proud of; yet, as I take it, their proudest boast before God and man may well be this, that none of them bear on the national escutcheon the bar sinister of slavery, but that in all of them every man is free, and that from this moment, the child that opens its eyes upon the sweet light of heaven, shall enjoy the inestimable privilege of being free-born.

The sight of this vast and smiling plain in the province of Vladimir, only a few years ago an untrodden forest, and now loaded with the ripe harvest of bended ears, and the sight of these hundreds of toiling peasants gathering for themselves the fruits of their own industry, and the history and memory of the emancipation of the Russian serfs, all combined, produce upon us an effect similar to that fabled of the wizard's wand, and sinking into a day-dream, we know not where we are, nor think whither we are going, until our fellow-passengers begin to stir themselves, and put their wraps and pillow-cases together, when, looking out of the carriage-window, we

see in the distance, and in the full splendour of an east Russian morning, a large town. It is fortress or kremlin crowned, and, abounding in many domed churches and monasteries, it stands on the edge of a bold bluff, at the confluence of these two mighty rivers, the Oka and Volga. This is the town of Nijni-Novgorod, which means the lower Novgorod, by way of distinguishing it from Novgorod the Great, the first of Russia's capitals.

The fair ground lies away from the town, on the other side of the Oka, and midway between the railway station and the town. It is the fair that attracts, and not the town; but in order to be able to form an adequate idea of its vast proportions, it is necessary to climb the steep hill rising from the river, and the highest part of the town; and if this can be done about the hour of sunrise, it will be all the better. This I also did, although not on the present occasion, but upon my return from Kazan. The boat got to the wharf at five o'clock in the morning, and leaving my luggage on board, I climbed up the ravine, and saw what was to be seen, and this was something as follows:—Two miles distant, there lies the railway station, the extreme eastern terminus of the European railway system, and at our feet the confluence of the great rivers which bind the whole empire of Russia together in a network of water-communication. Across the Oka a bridge of boats is thrown, always crowded with strangely hetero-

geneous specimens of humanity, and joining the town to the fair. On the bosom of this river there float scores of steamboats, and curiously constructed barges, a number of them capable of carrying a freight exceeding eight hundred tons. The present destination of many of these craft is Moscow, and the far-distant interior of Russia, whither they are carrying the treasures of the distant East, while those now descending the river are bringing to the fair the notions of the West for the bazaars of the East. At right angles to the mouth of the Oka there flows the mighty Volga, the Mississippi of Russia, by no means a silent highway during the holding of the fair. Even now in summer, it is a broad stream, and ever widening the farther you descend, to the eye's delectation; but after all, at this season, it is only an attenuated thing compared with what it will be in spring, when, with the melting of the snows and rains, it swells, and swells, and overflows its banks, and inundates thousands of square miles in the different provinces through which it flows, leaving behind it, as it retires, a rare residue of fever and ague,—for a season, the terror of all eastward-bound travellers, and the *bête noire* of the peasants who dwell upon the littoral. This noble river, which has already run a long course, and has still fourteen hundred miles to flow before it empties its waters into the Caspian Sea, is at present literally crowded with barges and steamboats, and the Volga now carries upwards of six

hundred steamers on its bosom. There they are, from Astrakhan, and the Caspian, and Kazan, barges that have sailed down the rivers of Siberia and the noble Kama, to lay the produce of the frozen North and of the Urals at the feet of the merchants of Europe assembled for trade purposes at Nijni-Novgorod. These busy rivers are in themselves sights not to be forgotten ; but after all, the sight *par excellence* is the fair itself, and thither accordingly we wend our way. Once across the bridge of boats, we are into it at once, or more accurately into it and a cloud of dust. This last is easily accounted for. Once that the fair is officially closed, all the booths and warehouses are locked up, the merchants leave as fast as they can get away, and the residents in the locality, having transferred themselves and their belongings to the town proper, the fair is left to rats, and mice, and solitary policemen. What becomes of the rats and mice at a later season, which is also an earlier, for it is the spring I speak of, deponent knoweth not, but at that season, the quiet and tenth-rate-dressed guardians of the peace must leave their solitary beat, for when the Oka and Volga overflow their banks, the vast plain on which the fair is built is covered with muddy water, to the depth of never less than fifteen feet. Granted, then, the fierce summer's sun, and the incessant tramping of many thousands of feet, and it is easy to account for the plague of dust which rises, and hangs in the air, and clogs the air-passages,

and powders the sober costume of Western tourists until their dearest friends would hardly know them again, or at least would inquire, could they only see them, 'Have you been transmogrified into the lineal descendants of the Miller of the Dee?'

At one end of the bridge of boats there stands the Exchange, a poor though large wooden structure; and here thousands of traders will assemble every day, and effect transactions during the fair to the tune of millions. And then at once, and immediately beyond the Exchange, begin the rows in which the different commodities are stored. A broad and deep canal in the shape of a horse-shoe separates the inner rows, situated in the vicinity of the Governor's house, from those in the more outlying districts. This is a precaution against fire. In the bazaar proper, and in the booths of the merchantmen, many different nationalities are represented. A few Englishmen, and no end of Germans; Russians innumerable, as is natural; Tartars by the thousand, some of them dealers in fancy-coloured boots and skull-caps, and many more of them servants and porters—in fact, the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the fair; Circassians, wonderfully subdued-looking when they are in civil life; and swarthy, tall-hatted Armenians, those Jews of the East, who are even a match for the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, and whose belts never know what it is not to be well lined with

bank-notes and acceptances. I saw only one native of the land of Sinim.

It takes a day's hard work to visit the rows, and get a fair notion of the varied contents of the fair, and that work I did until my rebellious feet cried, 'Hold, enough!'—There they were, the tea rows, containing innumerable chests of that great Russian favourite: Captain Rickard informed me he had sometimes bought upwards of 16,000 roubles' worth of tea and sugar at one time at the fair, for the use of the peasants on the estates he manages down in Orenburg. The rows of the furriers, where, as is proper in Russia, the peltry is so magnificent, that if English ladies could only get there with their husbands, these lords of creation would find they were in for an awkward quarter of an hour of it. The braziers' rows, resplendent in samovars, the tea-urns of Russia, mostly made in the workshops of Tula, on the banks of the Oka, which have become so fashionable in aristocratic circles in this country, since the Czar's most able and noble daughter has become a member of the Royal Family of England. The china rows, where the most ravishing pottery and glass-work is displayed. I entered one of the shops in the china row, and selected a few small and beautiful articles to bring home with me. Quite incidentally, I asked the salesman where they were made, when I was getting out my purse to pay for them. To my astonishment he said 'England.' 'England!' thought I,

‘then it is not worth while carrying coals to Newcastle,’ and telling him I was ‘Anglichánin,’ prayed to be excused from completing the purchase. He smiled, and graciously acceded to my proposition. Trunk-makers’ rows, filled with many-coloured boxes with bright metal bindings. These trunks are quite an institution of the country. Every peasant, man and woman, aims at being the happy possessor of one of them, in which he can store up his little ‘all,’ and still leave room for more. Drysalters’, paper, cloth, cotton, and linen rows, in which goods are stored up, sufficient, you would say, to supply all Russia and the East, and leave much over; but so great is the demand this year for everything, that before the two flags are taken down which float at the sides of the Votive Church, and whose removal indicates the closing of the fair, every ounce by weight, and every yard by measurement, will have been disposed of. Fish rows, in which hundreds of tons of dried sturgeon, and sterlet, and fish of every kind, and caviare—to eat which with enjoyment, requires, in my opinion, a developed taste—are all exposed for sale. Mountains of grindstones for Russia’s innumerable windmills, the very sight of which is more than enough to put the nose of the Newcastle grindstone out of joint for ever; and along the banks of the Volga, for no less a distance than six miles, heaps of iron from Siberia, the finest that the world can produce. We exhaust ourselves with the work of

inspection, and when all is over, and it is time to return by the night express to Moscow, the tenth has not been seen.

It is estimated that fully half a million traders visit the fair during eight weeks, and the estimate cannot be very far wrong, according to all reports. Curiously enough, the estimate is taken from the quantity of bread consumed, the Government compelling the bakers to send in a return each morning of the amount of bread they sell. The money exchanging hands during the fair exceeds £16,000,000 sterling. I travelled from the fair to Moscow in the company of a German Jew, a wholesale St. Petersburg store-dealer, who had purchased 84,000 roubles'—upwards of £9000—worth of Siberian rags for purposes of paper manufacture. The purchases are in many cases so large that credit for twelve months, and in some instances for two years, is asked for, and given. In the case of large dealers, the rule is to pay at one fair for what was bought the previous year. It is generally supposed that the gradual extension of the railway system must in time lessen the influence of this gigantic fair; but it is very evident that it will be many years before the glory of Nijni is a thing of the past. This year the trade has been immense, and as the Russian merchants have had it all to themselves, just as they had in the year after the Crimean war, their rejoicings are unbounded. Three hundred millions' worth of goods in roubles were

brought forward, and by the middle of August one hundred and eighty millions had been sold. The consequence was, that the fair would close earlier than usual, and with stocks of goods cleared out, the manufactories will have a prosperous year to look forward to.

Smoking is rigidly prohibited within the bounds of the fair proper, and until within the last two or three years, any one inadvertently breaking the law on this point, by smoking a papiros or cigar, was at once pounced upon by a Cossack or policeman, and mulcted on the spot to the tune of fifty roubles. Without thinking what I was doing, I took my papiros with me into the street as I left the restaurant where I had been dining, when the instantaneous reminder of the policeman caused me to fling it into the canal, with certainly greater haste than decorum. This precaution is not unnecessary. Most of the rows, or lines, as they are called, being constructed of wood, one single fire in the fair proper might endanger the whole. The fire-towers are numerous, and, as usual, the watchmen are always on the outlook. The sanitary arrangements are admirable : a perfect system of stone-built sewers has been constructed, and they are flushed with water from the river twice each day. As the bulk of the Russians are great smokers, it is a common thing for the merchants to descend the round towers leading to the sewers from time to time, and enjoy a quiet papiros.

The amount of drinking that goes on during the fair is said to be almost incredible. Champagne flows like water. At a hotel where I took breakfast, I happened to sit opposite a big German, a Moscow merchant, who was emptying the Selters water bottles with alarming speed. 'You are thirsty,' I remarked. 'And well I may be,' he replied; 'yesterday was Sedan-day, and six of us held a little commemoration of it; we sat up all night, and drank between us twenty-five bottles of champagne.' Dandy that he was—he wore a salmon-coloured satinette summer coat,—he turned round his elephantine back, and said, 'Do you see that broad stain all down my back?'—it ran down in the direction of his backbone,—'that stain has been made by the perspiration I was in last night.' Miserable mortal, his fingers and face looked as if he was in the last stage of dropsy.

'Fools for their sin and their offence
Do sore affliction bear.'

The morals of the fair are something frightful. Upwards of 10,000 persons are collected together, mostly Germans, Swedes, and Tartars, whose virtue, to speak with a euphemism, is supposed to be easy. They live in a far remote corner of the fair, or rather in a village beyond the fair, and the orgies practised there are so barbarous, that those who know most about them say, 'There is no viler hell on earth than Nijni-Novgorod during the fair-time, for those

who choose to make it so.' One of these hells was burned down on the night when I travelled to the fair, and the embers were still smoking when I drove through it to the boat. It was a singing saloon, and all the rest. The naphtha which was used for lighting purposes was spilt, and, catching fire, the whole place was soon in a blaze. There were a number of rooms in the upper portion of the brick building filled with women ; six of them were killed, and many more carried off to the hospital grievously wounded, by throwing themselves out of the windows. It is quite a common thing for the Russian youth, when entering upon manhood, to indulge in one wild and unrestrained debauch at the fair, which often costs them £5000, and after this is over, it is thought they will be ready to settle down with a sickened heart and a wiser head, to a quiet life in some humdrum provincial town.

Mr. Herbert Barry, who writes a book called 'Russia in 1870,' tells a good story of one of these gilded ducklings, a Siberian youth, whose father sent him to the fair with £25,000-worth of tallow to sell, instructing him, when he left home, to keep his accounts all straight, and then 'see a little of the world' before returning. The youth's name was 'Karl Karlovitch,' which in Russian, means Charles the son of Charles, a man in that country being known, not as among us by his name and surname, but by his Christian name, prefixed to the Christian

name of his father. In due time he returned from the fair to Siberia, and produced his papers in the presence of the old man, all of them being in perfect order. This business-like way of going to work pleased the father exceedingly, and having praised his hopeful son for his method, he asked for the money that the tallow had been sold for. 'As to that,' said Karl Karlovitch, 'I have not brought home any money; I have spent every kopeck at Nijni.' And so he had; he had squandered £25,000 on feasting, and most likely on rather more than questionable amusements. Mr. Barry concludes this incident by telling, how he had heard that Karl Karlovitch had become wiser, and eight years ago was considered one of the steadiest and cleverest merchants in Siberia.

As Captain Rickard was going down the Volga as far as Samara, on his way to Orenburg, and I was anxious to see something of old Tartardom at Kazan, we travelled together by steamboat, as we had hitherto done by railway. The boat left within an hour after the Moscow express arrived at Nijni, so that all I could do in his company at the fair, was just to drive through it, and get some hints as to where I should go upon my return, and go on board. The boat was comfortable, the first-class fare exceedingly moderate, and the passengers in the second-class part of the steamer, just where I wanted to see them, and such as I was anxious to see and study for

twenty-four hours : men and women of all sorts and conditions, and of not a few different nationalities. The distance to Kazan from Nijni is 381 versts, or 254 miles, and while the down-stream journey takes only twenty-four hours, such is the strength of the current of the Volga, that the return passage occupies half as long again, or thirty-six hours. The voyage is occasionally a little risky, owing to the amount of vodka consumed by some of the officers and crew, who then begin to race with other boats ; but, inasmuch as one of the steamers had been sunk, and fifty of the passengers drowned, only six weeks before, in one of these drunken escapades, we were hopeful that this accident would serve as a warning, till the end of the present season at least, and that the passage might prove safe and pleasant. We were not disappointed.

At this season the navigation of the Volga is somewhat intricate in a number of places, owing to the great reduction of the volume of water by summer's drought. In descending the stream, although we had to pole it pretty often, all went well, but in coming up we stuck fast thrice. Then followed a season of excitement, and shouting, and backing water, until, twice by our own endeavours, and once with the assistance given by a passing steamer, which hauled us off a sand-bank, we got into the fair-way again. It is much to be feared, that unless Russia looks to her own interests, so far as her rivers are

concerned, she will lose the practical use of some of them before very many years have transpired. They are gradually going down, sand-banks are accumulating, and she is neither introducing dredgers, nor, what is much more important, going to the root of the disease, by taking steps to arrest this serious fluviatile depletion. There can be no question that the volume of water in the Volga, and other Russian rivers is annually decreasing at present, owing to the gradual but serious disafforestation of the country. Wood is the only article of fuel. From the time I left the wharf at St. Petersburg till I arrived in Warsaw, and travelling as I did, north, south, east, and west, I never saw one lump of coal. Marine engines and locomotives are fired with wood; in all sorts of manufactories nothing else is used, and it is likewise employed everywhere over the country for domestic fuel. One of the sights of St. Petersburg which most strangely strikes a visitor, is the immense quantity of firewood stored up for the use of the capital, in huge barges, on the Neva, and on all the canals which intersect the city, while all through the country, in the neighbourhood of towns and villages, and by the side of the railways, it is the same. The foreshore of the Volga is literally covered with stacks of wood, in the neighbourhood of the boat stations. Granted then a vast country, with a population—and here I speak only of Russia in Europe—exceeding seventy millions, using nothing but wood for fuel,

and it is easy to understand that the forests, which so directly influence the rainfall, must be gradually and seriously decreasing in size, even in this country of forests, and this more especially, when no steps are taken, either by Government or private enterprise, to maintain any system of planting anew. But one single statement of fact will go further to convince us of this present danger than any amount of theory. As I have already stated, the distance between Moscow and Nijni is 273 miles. Well, to supply the locomotives alone with fuel for one year, it is necessary to clear 6000 acres of forest land. What then, I would ask, must the consumption of wood be, all over the country, and that for all purposes?

Pursuing our course down the Volga, we may now take a look for a few minutes at some of our fellow-passengers. Seated on the upper deck at sunset, drinking in the wonderful effects on river and land, three Tartars—the Tartars are Mohammedans—mount one of the paddle-boxes, and, spreading out their rugs, say their evening prayers. One of them is an old man, another is middle-aged, and the third is a youth. The old man is grave—his faith is supreme with him; the middle-aged Tartar wears a look of nonchalance—he takes to his devotion as a matter of course; the youth is agile in all his movements, and full of self-satisfaction. A fine-looking lad, it is a pleasure to see him. Facing

towards Mecca, the three make their salaams, and then falling upon their knees, perform their devotions. Sometimes they lie prone on the rug, with the face touching it. This lasts for a quarter of an hour, and then, taking both hands, and rubbing them over the face from the forehead downwards, they rise, fold up their rugs, and go down again among the steerage passengers. At sunrise they again mount the paddle-box, and go through the same exercise. If a great many professing Christians were only one-hundredth part as attentive to the exercises of religion as these Mohammedans, it would necessarily follow, from the nature of their faith, that it would be much better than it now is, alike for themselves and Christendom. These men are a small trading company, who, having finished their business at the fair, are bound for the remote East. And here is another trader—he is also a Tartar, and well, not to say splendidly, dressed. This man comes, he tells us, from Siberia, and he has been to the fair selling his parcel of pelts. The market, he says, has been very good, but sables will hardly sell, the fur of the silver squirrel being all the rage. There are any number of ordinary peasants on board, honest-faced Russians, clad in the long sheepskin coat with the wool inside. It is a general thing to laugh at the Russian peasants because they wander about in sheepskins, but for my part I never saw anything in this dress except to admire. I frequently thought how the poor, and often badly

clad English labourers in some parts of our country would envy the Russian peasant his sheepskin coat, if they only saw him in it. Why, with an ordinary covering for his head, and long boots, and the coat, he might set up at once for a gentleman ! Nor was the thought foreign to me, that if I should ever have to live in Russia over a winter, and was unable to purchase a set of furs, I should, in spite of any laughter at my singularity, take at once to the sheepskin as a duck takes to water.

Coming so closely in contact with these Russian peasants, of course you try to catch the idea conveyed by their countenances. And this we do, acting upon the principle, that it is always right to try and get the best, and not the worst, out of a man. When the Greek sculptor went abroad in search of a model, he went to discover beauty, and not to search out defects, and he often found the eye, or mouth, or nose of beauty, in faces otherwise homely enough. Unlike the Greek sculptor, the modern critic (and traveller too, for that matter) very often goes about in search of something to find fault with. So far as we are concerned, we have not a single atom of sympathy with this sort of thing. With all the homeliness, then, and rudeness of the outline of the Russian peasant's countenance, the idea you get from it, is that of 'rest' and 'gentleness,' things most beautiful and excellent in themselves, upon which, no doubt, the education his children are sure to

receive will improve. They are a quiet and soft-speaking people, taking an occasional turn at the 'tantrums,' in way of relief, just as quiet and soft-speaking people in other countries sometimes do.

Here are also a number of soldiers, bound for some remote military station, and having charge of a number of huge bales, with the Red Cross badge sewed on them, belonging to that beneficent guild. Poor fellows! they are poorly clad, and miserably nourished; if they were only meat-fed like their English *confrères*, they would be a little less high in the bone, and upon the whole good-looking men. We spoke to two of them, and asked a few questions. When engaged on extra duty, like the present, they received ten kopecks a day, just about twopence-halfpenny, and on that they had to live, or rather, let us say, exist. We gave one of them some silver money, and his gratitude was profuse. Captain Rickard asked him what he would do with it. 'Oh,' said he, 'I shall go first and have "Tchai,"'—that is, a few glasses of tea. I gave another soldier half-a-dozen apples; he received them with open arms, went to his haversack and pulled out a piece of black bread, and having sprinkled a pinch of salt over it, sat down, crossed himself thrice, saying grace, and had, what was to him, and indeed to any unfastidious person, a hearty meal. When all was consumed he crossed himself again, thus giving thanks. The attention of the Russian peasants to these little pro-

prieties of religion is something very marked, and exceedingly beautiful. Now and again, when travelling, you come across a squad of workmen, say half-a-dozen in number, preparing to sit down to dinner on board a barge, or on land. There is a huge black iron pot, the 'yitling' of the North of England, before them, filled with cabbage-soup, and small bits of meat, or fish-soup. Standing round the pot in a circle, they cross themselves, and then sitting down partake of their frugal meal, taking along with it large hunks of black bread, with the utmost propriety. The foreman takes the first spoonful, and then lays it down, the others take their turn, and this is repeated until the pot is emptied, and the fish-bones picked as clean as fish-bones can be picked, when all of them rise, cross themselves, and after a little rest are ready again for work. The Volga boats call at a number of stations, and at all of them wood is brought on board to fire the engine. This work is invariably done by women, who certainly have no sinecure. At these stations every variety of edibles, and simple drinkables, including 'quass,' a fermented liquor made by steeping black bread in water, is to be had in great abundance. The peasants line the landing-stage with their different commodities, chickens and ducks ready cooked, fish also cooked—although no true Russian will ever object to eat raw salt fish: it is a wonder they do not get an attack of diarrhoea,—apples, nuts, beautiful bread, white and black, gher-

kins, cucumbers, and milk. I several times bought a champagne bottle filled with delicious milk, bottle and milk costing only ten kopecks. A number of the river passengers in Russia supply themselves with food at these landing-stages, and thus, it is needless to say, they are able to live very cheaply.

There is no particularly fine scenery on the Volga. The left bank lies low, and in spring is inundated for miles inland ; on the right bank there is an occasional bluff, with some small town or village nestling at its foot, and then beyond it the far-stretching corn lands. It would repay any traveller, however, to take a sail down and up the Volga, if it was only to see the effects of sunrise and sunset. It is impossible to describe them, nor can these glorious and glowing heavens be compared to anything, than to that which the beloved John saw in vision when he says, 'And I saw as it were a sea of glass, mingled with fire.' Together with the splendour of the Volga sunset, there are the delicious odours borne on the wings of the evening wind, which rival the perfumes of Araby the Blest. They seem to the sense to come from many-acred fields of harvested wheat, and meads of honeyed flowers. And if day has its life scenes, and the evening hour its witchery and sweetness, night on the Volga is not without its wonders. Not without, indeed ! Why, it is full of awe, and wonder, and glory. In returning from Kazan two nights have to be spent on the river. On one of them our boat stuck fast,

and as there was a great deal of noise going on I went on deck, in spite of the river-damp, against which travellers are warned, to see what was the matter, and lo ! what a sight was that which in a moment burst upon my astonished eyes ! The midnight heavens were all aglow with untold myriads of large, and lustrous, and liquid planets. The *via lactea* was the milky way indeed. The stars seemed to come close down upon you, and you felt as if He, that Wonderful and Almighty One, who made the ordinances of heaven, the Pleiades with their sweet influences, Orion with his bands, who brings forth Mazzaroth in his season, and guides Arcturus with his sons, was very near at hand. Nor, may I say, did I ever before seem to realise so well as now, the meaning of these inspired words, ‘And the Lord brought Abram forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them. And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord ; and he counted it to him for righteousness.’ In this country the stars never can shine with such unparalleled splendour as they do in the high latitudes of Russia.

We arrived at the Kazan wharf about ten o’clock in the morning, and found ourselves plunged at once into clouds of dust—even the dust at Nijni was nothing to it. The scene on the shore was animating in the extreme. Kazan boasts of one hundred and twenty-

six manufactories of different kinds, most of them of soap, stearine, and tanning ; and what with the local trade, and the traffic kept up with Nijni during the time of the fair, the Tartar porters and lorrymen had piping times of it. The fruit-stalls were literally groaning under the weight of their contents :—cart-loads, and on the river brink, boat-loads, of large water-melons, costing only fourpence each ; apples, worthy of the guardianship of the Hesperides ; pears, deserving the name of ‘The Congress at Berlin,’—one of the latest names given to a choice variety, a toothsome fruit, much more toothsome, I should feel inclined to think, than that European Areopagus is ever likely to prove, to any one member of the brotherhood of Empire ; grapes, white and black, which had been brought up the Volga from the vineyards of Astrakhan ; and large baskets of luscious dates and figs, the first-fruits of the season. In St. Petersburg you are warned neither to eat much fruit, nor even to taste the water of the Neva ; here you may eat as much fruit and drink as much water as you please, as both are uncommonly good. The potable water is brought into Kazan from a considerable distance beyond the town.

The town of Kazan, with a population of 90,000, lies two and a half miles inland from the Volga, and is approached by means of a high causeway, with long stretches of stagnant water on the right hand, and the left, breeding, under the fierce morning and

midday sun, a deadly miasma. It was originally the capital city of a Mongol or Tartar kingdom, and was subjugated by Russia under Ivan the Terrible, rather better than three hundred years ago. John razed the city to the ground. From an ecclesiastical point of view, Kazan is famous for possessing a so-called miraculous image, the far-famed, 'Our Lady of Kazan.' This image escaped uninjured during a great conflagration, which reduced to ashes the church where it had its habitation. In the eyes of the orthodox Russians it is accounted more sacred than any other. It has several times been carried at the head of the army, and under its auspices Russian soldiers have proved regardless of death, however terrible the odds against them. The town contains a large University, on whose staff, until recently, there was an English Professor, who was at the same time a Professor of English. This gentleman died last year, and so strong was the feeling against us in Russia at the time, that the Governor of the Province gave orders he was to have no successor in office. When I left St. Petersburg, General Sementoffsky had asked me to write to him from Kazan, as he did not know very well, how I should get on in the Eastern provinces of the Empire ; and when I did so, I told him about the affair of the English Professor, at the same time adding, that I gave my good friends the Russians greater credit for astuteness, than to allow a University so far in the East, to remain without a

Professor of the English Language, more particularly when England and Russia were almost next-door neighbours now, in the lands of the rising sun. 3

An ancient Tartar town, there are still upwards of 8000 of that strong, thickset, and black-eyed race in Kazan. A Mohammedan people, they inhabit a distinct quarter, and when visiting it, at the same time I visited their bazaar, one of their metchets or mosques, and a caravanserai. It was the hour of noonday prayer when I visited the mosque, and although an 'infidel' in their eyes, I was allowed to stand in the upper doorway, only three feet from the spot where the worshippers were kneeling in prayer. They came in apparently whenever it suited them best, and each man left his outer pair of shoes behind him at the doorway, before he ventured into the holy place. It is very common in Russia to see men of the better class wear two pairs of shoes or elastic boots. This is because of the dust or mud, which prevails according to the season. Etiquette does not permit any visitor to enter a house with muddy or dusty boots. The devotions in this metchet were solemn and imposing. The worshippers often rose to their feet and bowed in Oriental fashion, then with practised ease they fell on their knees again, touching the ground with the forehead. At one portion of the service, the officiating priest, or Mullah, gave a plaintive recitative, when those present sat cross-legged, extending the palms of the hands over the knees. At

the conclusion of the service all stood erect, and first having touched the tip of each ear with the thumbs, extending the fingers laterally as far as they could, they brought them together at the top of the forehead, and slowly and reverently rubbed them over the whole of the face, till they finished off with the chin or the points of the beard, just as the Tartar merchants did on board the Volga boat. They then left in a hurried manner, and putting on their outer shoes went off to their respective callings. The chief priest of the Tartar clan at Kazan, got himself into trouble with the Russian Government at the beginning of the late war. He, and several others of his profession were strongly suspected of preaching up a crusade against the Russians, and stealthily distributing arms among the Tartars, and the long and short of the matter was that, he was seized and banished to Siberia, where it is to be hoped he will speedily be reduced, or, as the Russians would call it, educated into a better state of mind. The caravanserai was just an Eastern inn, fitted up with a large kitchen for cooking purposes, and a great number of small rooms, each of them containing a divan and table, the divan serving either for a bed or chair. The bazaar was the Eastern shop, with, as usual, almost all the goods exposed to view, and a keen-eyed dealer sitting behind them, ready to ask three times as much as he knows very well he will soon be willing to take.

In this Tartar district, and indeed all through the town of Kazan, the Tartar women walk abroad closely veiled, and are generally followed either by their husband, or by some aged female who carries the baby. Veiled though they are, however, they are not insensible to the presence of the 'infidel,' and, if they think the husband won't see—they do not care so much for the old woman,—they very deftly and quietly draw aside one corner of the shrouding shawl, and take a good look at him. They have got ruddy cheeks and dark eyes, and are a good deal more than good-looking.

Kazan is a great Russian convict settlement, and there are always a number of Poles in the city, deported from their own country on account of some supposed political offence or other. At present a good many Turkish officers are interned in it. Not a few of the Turks have taken to bad ways, having contracted an inordinate liking for Russian strong waters, and only a few days after I left, one of them killed a brother officer when labouring under the influence of liquor. It is most likely that many of the exiles and convicts will leave their bones in Kazan, for no town in Russia is more unhealthy. A more villainous-smelling place I certainly never was in before, and that is saying a good deal after visiting St. Petersburg and Moscow. I gravely suspect that typhoid fever must be a constant scourge in all Russian cities, and it is a fact that typhus, marsh-

fever, and consumption, are so deadly in Kazan, that more die in it than are brought to the light of day. If it was not for a constant and extensive immigration, the town would soon dwindle down into nothingness. I travelled from Kazan to Nijni in the company of the Professor of Chemistry in the University, and a German civil engineer, and these gentlemen told me about the grave unhealthiness of the place. The German informed me that during the sixteen years of his residence in Kazan, he had been down with marsh-fever five times. Speaking of this gentleman, I may mention that I was greatly amused with the first impression I got of him. When he found out I was an Englishman, he said, 'Ah! I learned English at school twenty-five years ago, and I still remember the words of the Vicar of Wakefield,—“I was ever of opinion that the honest man who married early, and brought up a large family, did more service to the state than he who continued single, and only talked of population.”' Several establishments exist in Kazan for the sale of the far-famed 'Koumiss,' a fermented drink made from mare's milk, and reported to be an excellent curative for consumptive patients. I was strongly tempted to try it, but as my companion told me its first effects were far from pleasant, I thought it was the safest policy, under existing circumstances, to have nothing to do with it. I only witnessed one act of brutality in Russia, and that was here. A Russian brought

out a young kitten, and laid it down before a dog to worry, but as dog and kitten played with each other, he seemed likely to be balked in his brutal purpose. At last, tossing the kitten in the air with the tip of his boot, it fell with a heavy thud on the ground, and hounding on his dog, the small grimalkin was soon put out of misery. The Russians, as a rule, are soft-tempered and gentle, but brutal natures are the same everywhere. This city and district suffered severely during the late war. At the first assault on Plevna, the infantry and artillery of the Kazan corps lost 900 men, at the second, 1000, and then only about 200 were left.

At Kazan I parted with my most helpful friend, and companion for ten days, Captain Rickard, and I should consider myself utterly unworthy of the friendship of any gentleman, if I did not now, as I have so often had occasion to refer to him, acknowledge my great indebtedness to him. He helped me as an inquiring traveller in innumerable ways. He is at once one of the best, and ablest, and most generous of men. A Cornish mining engineer, who has had lengthened engagements in France, Italy, Austria, and Switzerland, he now manages three large estates in the Urals and Orenburg, containing between four and five hundred thousand acres, for a company of Englishmen, consisting almost exclusively of members of the Houses of Lords and Commons. The company paid £400,000 for the estates. There are

20,000 people living on them, and 5000 of these are employed under the eye of Captain Rickard and of his several subordinates. About the latter part of October, at the invitation of the Russian Government, he was to accompany the Grand-Duke Constantine and others into the Caucasus, to see what can be made of the minerals in that region. A literary as well as a practical man, Captain Rickard is busily engaged in writing a work on Eastern Russia, and hopes to publish next spring.

In a country with a population of seventy millions—I speak of European Russia—where fifty-six millions are peasants and agricultural labourers, it is fitting that we should say something about them, and as the provinces on either side of the Volga are famed for their agricultural produce, this appears the proper place to introduce a few remarks.¹ And first, as to the peasant's house: The peasantry do not live in scattered dwellings, but in small villages, containing from half-a-dozen to a hundred houses. In some parts of the country these villages are thickly planted; in others this is not the case. A peasant's house, as on the banks of the Volga, is not particularly inviting to look at, but the majority of them are quite as comfortable as many an English farm-labourer's hovel, and far more commodious. The

¹ The substance of the remaining portion of this chapter was given as a lecture, illustrated by diagrams kindly prepared for the occasion by one of the office-bearers of my church, and enlarged from sketches furnished me by Captain Rickard.

houses are entirely built of wood, and the chimney does not stand on the ridge as with us, but in the middle of the slant of the roof. They are block-houses, and invariably stand with the gable-end facing the street or the river, as the case may be. The roof is covered with loose straw, not thatch, and this is kept down and secured with blocks of timber. Facing the door, in the corner of the kitchen, as indeed in each room in every house in Russia, there is placed the Sacred Image, or 'Ikon,' as it is called, and, because of the presence of the Ikon, it would be considered a grave mark of disrespect to enter the house, or any room in it, covered. The Russians on entering, first of all look up at the image and cross themselves. The cottage has three windows, that the light, not only of the day, but of the Trinity, may shine into the dwelling. In one corner there stands a large stove, and the top of the stove, called the 'palata,' is the favourite sleeping-place of the old people during the winter. When the Russian peasant manages to save a little money, instead of putting it into an old stocking, he generally hides it beneath the stove, in case of fire. If he does not do this, his hiding-place is very often the pillow of an old divan. Above the 'palata,' and between it and the straw roof, there is a wooden floor, covered with earth, to keep in the heat of the stove during the long and severe winters, and I suppose, upon the rule of contraries, to keep

out the fierce heat of the short summer. Wooden settles, used as beds, stand round the walls of the cottage, and these, with a table, a gaily-metalled trunk or two, and a very small assortment of ordinary domestic articles, constitute a Russian peasant's household gods. At the gable-end of the house there stand two poles. One has a hempen swab fastened to the top, and is kept for the purpose of extinguishing very possible fires, as speedily as possible. A musical man, and fond of song, the other has a cage at the top, and here the starling comes and builds in spring, and rears her young, and enlivens the humble home with her cheerful ditty. Each cottage has a vegetable ground or garden, where, in addition to the ordinary kitchen produce, and particularly the cherished cabbage, there is invariably a patch of sunflowers. This gorgeous production is useful in two ways. As the fasts of the Church are very frequent, and long, and severe, and the peasants keep them much better than the upper class, they extract an oil from the sunflower, with which they smear their black bread, thus making it alike more palatable and nutritious. They dry the seeds, and when seasons of feast and junketing come round, they crack and munch them for hours together. Russians of all classes have an absolute passion for hazel-nuts and sunflower-seeds, and during the autumn, as they all crack them, and are always cracking them, travelling by railway be-

comes somewhat irksome. The village has its common orchard, a large portion of whose cheap and plentiful produce is sent to the town fruit-markets; and most of the houses have an ice-store, where that cooling, but, as doctors now say, rather dangerous delight, can be kept against the heats of summer. Almost every house has its bath, and every village has a public bath. While the Finns take the bath thrice during the week, the Russians take it once. They use the steam-bath. Its construction and use is as follows:—In a small room there is a layer of gravel, which, when the bath is to be used, is heated to as great a degree as possible; cold water is then poured upon it, and the Russian soon finds himself in a thick and overpowering cloud of steam, which opens every pore of his body, and bathes him in a profuse perspiration. I generally manage to try all sorts of baths wherever I happen to go, and have delighted in them, from the Romish bath in Vienna, to the Royal Waters at Bad-Gastein in the Tyrol; but somehow or other I never could venture on a Russian bath. During the winter, a favourite custom is to rush out of the steam-bath into the keen frosty air, and roll over and over in the snow. This pastime would most likely kill any ordinary mortal; but as far as a Russian is concerned, it only enlivens and stimulates him. Behind the peasant's house there is a covered cattle-shed for winter, where the scanty herd is generally fed upon

straw. Beyond the shed there lies the vegetable garden and sunflower ground. Next to this come the corn-stacks and windmills, then the summer cattle-run, while beyond these lies the land which industry makes as much of as possible.

Russia is essentially the land of windmills, for of course it is only in the small towns and cities that the wheat and rye can be ground by steam-power. Should a modern order of knight-errantry ever arise in Europe, going forth to do valiant deeds, under the patronage of a newly elected saint, St. Don Quixote,—and a St. Don Quixote would be a much safer and lovelier immortal to swear by than St. Jingo,—the members of this order need only go to Russia, to find claims for the exercise of their chivalry in every hour of the twenty-four, and for such a term of years, until it would have to be said that the lank and attenuated knights, the first members of the order, were ‘sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.’ In Russia there are as many windmills and millstones, as would grind the magic salt, which gives to the wide ocean the name of the briny deep. In so vast a corn-growing country, it would be simply impossible to bring all the grain to the towns to be ground, and accordingly the windmills are thickly scattered over the wide and monotonous plains or steppes, oftentimes miles away from any village. In travelling to Kief I saw hundreds of them on the southern steppe, and generally about six or nine

standing together. I have mentioned that beyond the windmills on the peasant's allotment there lies his land, and each male in every family possesses between fifteen and thirty acres, according to the quality of the soil. This is farmed on what is termed the three-field system, which means that the rotation is as follows: one-third annually lies fallow, another grows wheat and rye, and another grass.

In what way the allotment land is measured now I cannot tell—most likely as land is measured among ourselves; but before new fashions were introduced into Russia, the method was novel, and, to certain persons at least, must have been decidedly memorable. When the heads of the people had fixed upon certain boundaries, and set up the stones, all the small boys of the district were gathered together, and a procession, composed of seniors and juniors, was formed. Whenever a boundary-stone was come to, a sound thrashing was administered to one of these lively urchins, and this drastic treatment was administered to the *corpus vile* of one Russian youth after another, until the survey was completed. The lads ran home crying, as it was perfectly natural they should do under the circumstances; and when the elders saw these welcome and flowing tears, they concluded that the boundaries would never be disputed in any coming time, as those who had been thus beaten, would retain a lively recollection of the spot where they had suffered in the flesh, and would hand down

the record of fact from one generation to another. 'What !' it would be asked in any case of dispute hereafter, 'that not the boundary? Why, the late Alexander Alexandrovich was flogged there eighty years ago.'

The few domestic animals owned by the peasant, and herded by the children of the family, eagerly crop whatever green thing comes up on the ploughed fallow in their lean hunger. In the villages on the banks of the Volga, there is generally a large granary between the village and the river, and in this the produce is stored up, until the parcel is sent off by steamer to some distant town, perhaps to make bread for the citizens of Moscow and St. Petersburg.

No sketch of a Russian village would be complete without some mention of the church. It is the only commanding building in the place, and sometimes seems large enough to hold all the village, houses and people put together, under its vast roof. Generally whitewashed, as to its outer walls, and gay with green-painted domes, it affords a striking and picturesque contrast to the weather-beaten and time-darkened cottages of the peasants. It may boast of two or three domes, of a colonnade with half-a-dozen lofty and massive pillars, and a gorgeous interior, fitted up with sacristy, tabernacle, and the proper number of holy pictures, and still from first to last, the entire cost of everything about it will not exceed £300. If we could only build churches at this figure in England, I rather fancy that not a few

congregations would have larger and better-ventilated buildings than they now occupy.

Since the Act of Emancipation, the Russian peasant has become a landed proprietor, that is to say, he is so after a fashion. He holds land which cannot be alienated, but he holds it under his Commune, which, as a corporate body, may be said to be his superior, and this means a good deal more than our term 'Lord of the Manor.' The peasant himself of course is a member of the Commune. Each Commune has its head, or 'Elder,' and he generally holds office for three years. He is a man of no small importance and power. He is responsible to the Government for the manners of his small community, and to him the army schedules are sent annually to be filled up for the conscription. In this way no Russian of the proper age can possibly shirk military service. It is customary in these Communes to re-allot the peasants' land, sometimes in three, sometimes in five, and in occasional instances once in ten years. The *raison d'être* for this custom is the following:—The number of males in each family after a few years may either greatly increase or decrease, and unless this system was followed, in the one case the allotment would be much too small, while in the other it would just be as much too large. That this custom gives universal satisfaction it would not be right to say. A lazy peasant may take all the strength out of his land, and thus impoverish it for his successor, while

an industrious peasant might be tempted to say, 'Why should I put all my strength and money into my allotment, when I know it must pass out of my hands in a few years?' Speaking of the land question and the peasants, I may mention that they are still in a manner *adscripti glebæ*, or bound to the soil, to this extent, that although the more enterprising of them may make their way to the towns, and become merchants and traders, still, they are compelled to pay the Communal taxes, and may be summoned from a distance of hundreds of miles to attend Communal meetings, sometimes expressly got up that these now prosperous men may be induced to buy off their presence, by sending down a handful of paper roubles for festive and drinking purposes. No doubt these, and other anomalies and inconveniencies, will be removed in a few years. Among ourselves the law occasionally works with a good deal of friction, and even in England, occasionally, a coach and six has been known to be driven through an Act of Parliament. The peasants in Russia own upwards of seventy millions of acres. The nobles have vast estates besides, but so great is the extent of the country, and so scanty in proportion to the land is the population, that large districts still remain uncultivated. In the south, and in what *par excellence* may be called the granary of Russia, some corn speculators occasionally farm as many as five thousand and ten thousand acres, renting them at twopence

per acre. This grain is entirely grown for export purposes. For the last few years the Russian wheat has not been in such demand as formerly, on account of its lessened size. Nor is this difficult to account for. The land is not manured, and because of this, it gradually becomes so exhausted, that in many parts it must lie fallow for fifteen years before it will yield another crop. At present this creates no great practical inconvenience, if we except the diminished export trade, seeing that when his allotment is exhausted, the peasant just removes his plough and farming gear to a patch of virgin soil; but when the population of Russia has grown, as it must do, some sort of system, which the peasant would now consider high-class farming, must be introduced. The very manuring of the soil would be no small difficulty, and those who know the climate thoroughly are of opinion, that it could be done best by parking sheep, but for no longer time in any one year than twenty-four hours. To manure any longer would make the land too hot; in droughty seasons the grain would be burnt up, and in wet seasons it would run to straw. Rye is an autumn-sown grain, and when it gets proud because of the autumnal rains, it is eaten down before winter, and thus is preserved. And yet in spite of this tendency to over-luxuriance, rye, and indeed all kinds of grain, grow best when sown in damp or wet soil, as this hastens the period of germination.

In the north of Russia the land is generally poor ; down the great arterial river of the Volga it is good ; and in what is called the Black-Earth Country, an extensive zone, extending almost from the gates of Moscow to within sight of the beautiful waters of the Dnieper, and so called from the colour of the soil, it is rich beyond compare. The soil in this zone varies from six, and twelve, to eighteen inches in depth. Some English farmers have settled down on it, and have succeeded well ; and even in the thinner-soiled regions, as, for example, between St. Petersburg and Moscow, if a Dutch boer, or, better still, a Scotch farmer, only got an allotment of a few thousand acres, he would think himself in paradise. The seasons differ greatly, and the climate in the north during any year, is much more propitious than that of the south. Last year the harvest was so bad in many places, that the peasants had to eat bread, made half of rye and half of the bark of the birch, while, at the same time, they were compelled to sell their horses for a rouble and a half, as they had nothing for them to eat. This year it is altogether different, and every one is rejoicing in overflowing abundance. It is most gratifying to think that this is so, after what the country has suffered during the war. In the north of Russia the harvest is late. Thousands of acres were standing uncut when I travelled through it at the end of August. But when the grain has once been reaped and gathered, the autumn sowings are soon got over.

The harrow follows the plough in that light friable soil, the sower follows the harrow, and another harrow follows him, and the work is done. The grain soon germinates, and then comes the welcome snow to protect the tender blade from the rigour of winter. The threshing-floors are of the primitive order, a piece of ground beaten hard in the middle of a field, or near the corn stacks, and when the straw is removed, women toss up the grain into the air, and winnow it. In the north, the horse only is used in agriculture, midway between Moscow and Kief, the ox appears, and between them horse and ox perform the labours of the field. Midway between Kief and Warsaw, the horse finally disappears, and the ox remains lord of all he surveys. Vast herds of oxen, sheep, and thousands of swine, are seen from time to time out of the railway. The Russian pigs have a mane right down the back, like the wild boar; probably they are a cross. The shepherds of Russia are among the basest and most ignoble of men.

The peasants are a hard-working, yea, even a slaving class. Once that the snows and spring rains have disappeared, it may be said they never rest from their arduous labours until winter returns, when they take their rest with a vengeance, by sleeping for days and almost weeks together, around, and if not exactly within, at any rate on the top of the broad flat stove. The summer season is called by them 'passion' time, because of the length and severity of

the toil. In the harvest season they camp out in the fields, and toil from the dawn of day until dewy eve has sunk into the darkness of the night. On the southern steppes I saw the sower scattering abroad his precious seed-corn when the shadows were falling fast, as well as at the hour of early dawn. What a lesson of industry to all men, and especially to those engaged in scattering seeds of kindness, and doing good, and working God's work for Christ's sake ! 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand,' said the wise king Solomon, while He who was greater than Solomon said, 'I must work the work of Him who sent Me while it is day ; the night cometh, when no man can work.' Brave fellows ! ye patient toiling peasants ; noble wives and daughters ! ye humble women of cottage homes and cottage acres, ye know not what it is to eat the bread of idleness. God give you good ! Devout, God-fearing, and passing industrious, the Russian peasant has a great future before him.

Field industry generally begins about the third week in April, and closes with the first week of October. With the cessation from out-of-door work, begins the season of village fairs, and harvest festivals, and no end of junketing. The male peasants, brushed up, wearing felt or leather boots, red shirts, tall hats which would fetch a premium at Donnybrook, and sheepskin coats, meet together and discuss the affairs of the Commune. The matrons also meet together, but what they talk about

it would perhaps be rather difficult to say ; and the young marriageable girls go to the church in a body, and pray, saying, ‘ O our Lady, Mother of God, cover the earth with snow, and protect us with young men.’ And the snow soon comes and covers up every deformity, and makes all lovely and bright beneath the clear blue sky ; and the young men come too, and there is mirth, and dance, and song, and marriage-bliss, in Russian peasant homes ; and thus the year goes round, and life goes on from generation to generation.

CHAPTER IV.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

IN the three previous chapters, being outward bound, we have made the sea-journey to St. Petersburg, something better than 1400 miles from Carlisle, have gone 150 miles north from the capital, to Lake Saima in Finland, and then 400 miles south from it, to Moscow, the heart of this great Empire, where, owing to difference of longitude, the time is two hours and a half in advance of Greenwich ; from Moscow, again, we have journeyed about 600 miles due east, and down the Volga, as far as Kazan, the farthest limit of our present tour, with the time three hours and three quarters before Greenwich ; and now, we are homeward bound with a run.

It takes about fifty hours to reach Moscow, by river and rail, from Kazan. I left this last-mentioned town by steamer, starting at five o'clock in the afternoon, and arrived at Nijni-Novgorod at five o'clock on the morning of the second day following. The Moscow express did not leave before half-past eight

in the evening, and this gave me a long day to see the fair. A traveller due at his home duty by a certain date, and anxious to make the most of his annual outing, and this especially when he is far from home, and in a country where everything is entirely new, is often tempted to work at high-pressure, and treat his body with something like scant courtesy. Time, however, brings its revenge, and if that wise and tender guardian, Mother Nature, ever administered a sound castigation to any of her rebellious sons, she did it to me during the night succeeding this day, and throughout the night of the day following. She plied this *corpus vile* of mine with whips and scorpions, until by the time I flung myself into a bed at the Grand Hotel at Kief, after six nights' constant travelling, she left me, if not a wiser, at any rate a sadder man, than I had been, physically speaking, for a few years. What with the heat and the dust, the noise, novelty, and excitement of the fair, I was pretty well jaded by the time the express was ready to start, and in hopes that the guard would give me a second-class carriage, where I could stretch and somewhat rest my limbs, I administered a judicious tip. This movement, however, was to no purpose, and although the civil conductor put the 'Barrin' into a comfortable enough carriage—persons apparently of the better sort are often called 'Baron' in Russia, just as they are called 'Marquis' in Italy,—such was the rush and crush of passengers,

that it was easily seen we were in for a night of it. The reason of the crowd of travellers was that, trade having been so brisk and quick, a number of the merchants had cleared out their stocks, and with their foremen and servants, were already hurrying off home to different parts of Russia thus early in September. The Russians, as a rule, are big and remarkably well-conditioned men—I speak now of the merchants and their dependants,—but their size by day, is all as nothing to their bulk when travelling by night. They wear, all of them, thick greatcoats, and some of them, even in autumn, furs; and what between the proportions they then assume, and the bundles they carry along with them, which, overflowing the racks, are littered up and down the floor of the carriage, an Englishman of average size is pretty well elbowed out of existence. But all this crushing in a fair-express is as nothing, when compared with the result produced by the Russians' horror of fresh air. As soon as the train starts they pull up the windows, however full the carriage may be; when the early morning chill comes on, they pull up a second window, always used in winter against the frost; and fevered, half-suffocated, and altogether miserable, the air-loving 'Anglichánin' is compelled to accept the situation. In sheer desperation, I opened one of the inner carriage-doors several times during the night, and drank in a few deep draughts of the pure crisp air with unalloyed delight, but a huge merchant, who

kept crushing up his knees against mine, however much I might draw them in, and who was walled in with coats and rugs, growled out so deep a bass of remonstrance whenever I put my hand on the door, and he was awake to see me do it, that at last I gave it up. Granted then a crowded carriage, hermetically sealed, and a weary foreigner in it, who tries to relieve his sorrows by an occasional quarter of an hour's stand, and it is easy to imagine how miserable this night must have been. But the longest night disappears before the dawn. At sunrise we drew up at a station, where two women were standing on the platform behind vast copper basins and ewers placed on stands. In one moment I saw that relief was at hand; rushing up to one of them, I plunged my face and head deep down into the basin, motioned the woman to pour the welcome water over my head, and then after getting a good scrubbing, and swallowing a couple of tumblers of hot tea, and lighting up a papiros, I felt that for that day at least I could say, 'Richard is himself again.'

I had a three hours' wait at the 'Kourski Wachsaal,' or station at Moscow, before the afternoon express started for Kief, 586 miles due south, and instead of spending a couple of them in that city of magnificent distances, which rather less than a week before I had pretty thoroughly examined, I left my luggage with a ticket-porter, and wandered about the environs of the station for the twofold purpose of exercise and

observation. Situated as this station was, in one of the industrial quarters, in the outskirts of Moscow, I managed to secure some little insight into Russian handicraft of different kinds. I may give one instance of what I saw in the way of humble toil. Opposite the principal entrance to the railway station, a travelling cobbler was standing at the corner of a street, plying his hammer and nails with mechanical precision and machine-like speed. The man, and the man at his work, was something, once seen, not to be forgotten. This Russian 'souter,' like the lass in the familiar lines, was 'tall and slender,' his face was pale, his hair was lank, and as I surveyed his *retroussé* nose and keen grey eye, I said to myself, 'Well, Brăt, my Slavonic brother, if I was a member of the Russian Secret Police I should feel strongly inclined to suspect you of holding Socialist opinions.' He required no stool, neither did he use awl or waxed thread. A pole four feet high stuck in the ground, with a rude last fastened on the top of it, a leather bag tied about his loins and filled with tacks, another bag containing scraps of leather, and a hammer,—this was his stock-in-trade; and erect, yet slightly stooping, he toiled like an honest workman. Taking up an old elastic-sided boot, that had evidently come through many vicissitudes, he put it over his last, filled his mouth with the small nails, placed a scrap of leather on the shoe, where it seemed most needed, and then, with lightning speed, used hammer and

nails, refilling his mouth as often as it was emptied, until in a quarter of an hour, during which time I stood and watched him, he put off his hands a very tidy and presentable piece of work. These travelling artisans—shoemakers, carpenters, tailors, etc.—are very common in Russia. The carpenters are particularly skilful in the use of the axe, and it has been said, that if a Russian peasant or carpenter only gets an axe put into his hands, without using any other tool he will very speedily build an excellent wooden house.

Leaving Moscow at half-past one o'clock in the afternoon, we were hurried through a flat but not uninteresting country, in which the fertility of the soil, and the agricultural industry of the peasants were something delightful to witness, and when the night fell, and the bright stars shone out, we drew up, and halted for half an hour at Tula, the chief town of the province of the same name, having a population of about 60,000, and the Birmingham, Sheffield, and Enfield of Russia all in one. The small arms manufactured here arm the Russian hosts—the greater part of the artillery is made at Krupp's works, at Essen in Germany,—while, much more agreeable to reflect upon, the thousands of samovars turned out of the Tula workshops annually, furnish every house in Russia, palatial and peasant, with the celebrated national tea-urn. Starting again, we rushed out into the chill and star-lit night, and across the southern

steppes. In my experience, this was a night long to be remembered. I fain would have wooed the sleep-bringing god, but a plague of fleas drove me from his embrace, and in addition to the attacks of these lively *chevaliers d'industrie*, the boorish and filthy habits of a company of third-rate Jew merchants, returning to Odessa from Nijni, rendered the night miserable almost beyond endurance. During the afternoon, I had seen an abnormal number of these common continental travelling pests, and these of abnormal proportions, hopping about, but it was not until night fell that they buckled on their armour, and sallying forth from every nook and cranny in the cushioned carriage, with their leaders at their head, began their fierce onslaught. The Jews slept and snored through it all, with nothing more in way of remonstrance at pertinacious phlebotomy than might be indicated by occasional kicks and shrugs; but I, a miserable Englishman, sat erect in my seat, buried in my ulster, and wished for the day. To say that I was thankful, is to use one of the tamest of phrases, when at six o'clock next morning we arrived at Kursk, where, having to get into another train, happily at one and the same time I got rid of fleas and Jews together.

It was within three or four hours after we had left Kursk, that I witnessed an instance of what appeared to me singular want of taste. Alongside a station where we stopped for a short time there was a villa,

with a beautiful garden, which was filled with summer flowers, garden and flowers being rendered all the more attractive by the presence of a fountain, which was playing in the bright sunshine. As I stood looking into it over the railing, trying to see what cultivated flowers were common to Russia and England, a gentleman who was walking up and down, plucked two large spikes of mignonette, and very handsomely gave them to me. I bore off my sweet-scented gift to the carriage, and as an old nurse, who had charge of the children of a family of gentle birth, also in the carriage, was sitting opposite me, and her low soft voice, and gentle and kindly ways, had pleased me exceedingly, I offered her the half of my floral treasure. She accepted the mignonette, smiled and bowed, and without even smelling it, thrust it as unceremoniously into her pocket as she might have done her pocket-handkerchief. Whence could come this lack of appreciation for beauty and fragrance? I asked myself this question then, and I have often done so since, but up to this hour I have never been able to answer it.

As the day advanced, and we travelled through the vast corn-growing country, where every member of the different peasant households was abroad, the tent pitched by the side of the arabas, and men, women, and children all hard at work, it was easy to see that we had left the colder north far behind, and were now in the sunny south. Complexion and

costume alike were different. In the north, the peasants were blue-eyed and fair, now they were black-eyed and dark-haired ; and whereas in the north, their appearance too often indicated that they were not sufficiently fed, the stout and sturdy, broad-shouldered and strong-limbed, country people that were now to be seen, afforded unmistakable evidence that they were living among flesh-pots, and where there was fulness of bread. The costume also was now more picturesque, especially in the case of the women, who wore as a head-covering, a large gay-coloured kerchief, rolled into the shape of a turban, and who, with their handsome and sun-burnt faces, bright red petticoats, and yellow top-boots, presented as pretty a sight as can be seen anywhere in the way of costume.

The famous corn-producing provinces through which we are now travelling on our way to Kief are equally famous for their honey. Hence the number of bee-stocks that we see fastened high up in the trees. The Russians are exceedingly fond of honey, and as soon as the peasant has built a shed for his cattle, and a block-house for himself, as a bee-master he erects an apiary. The greater part of the honey, of course, is consumed by the family ; but a portion is always sacredly kept, at least in certain parts of Russia, against the occasion of a funeral. At this season, a pot of honey is carried by the mourners to the place of interment, and placed on

the top of the newly-filled-in grave. The reason for this custom is that, when the spirit returns to see that the body has been properly disposed, it may not become angry by being left without suitable refreshment, and when the bear, or some other animal, has scented out the honey-pot during the night, and abstracted its contents, the simple-minded and superstitious peasant believes, when he finds the vessel emptied, that the soul of Nicolai Nicolaiovitch has visited the grave, and the worn-out house of clay, and gone again to the land of spirits ; whence, indeed, he devoutly hopes he may never return to the humble cottage, for, as it is reported, he prays to the deceased, begging him to stay where he is, as there are still plenty of mouths to fill without the incubus of another. In those provinces where bears are most commonly found, the peasant erects his apiary, not on the ground, but, as I have stated, he fastens his stocks or hives up in the trees, and this in way of precaution, for the bear is just as fond of honey as the peasant. But this by itself is not a sufficient protection, for Bruin can climb the tree as well as the peasant, and thrusting his paw, or insinuating his flexible nose into the bee-stock, he soon makes short work of his dainty dessert of honey, comb, and bees, all together. In order to outwit these tactics on the part of his natural and sagacious enemy, the peasant suspends a large block of wood after such a fashion, that one end of it hangs below

the mouth of the hive, and this is often the means of causing the bear to lose his life. Bruin, bent upon enjoying the sweets of existence, climbs the tree, and when he finds the block of wood hindering him, he pushes it aside with his paw. The wily peasant having suspended the log, it swings back, and gives the Bear a good rap on the head. Irritated at this evil treatment, he thrusts it aside again, but now with greater force than before, only however to receive a heavier blow, and the attack and defence are continued with ever increased vigour, until poor Bruin, stunned, falls to the ground; when the peasant, who all along has been watching this tragi-comedy from some safe hiding-place, sallies forth and despatches him. The word 'Bear' in the Russian language means a 'connoisseur in honey,' that is, in that which is sweetest, and as the bear among the animals, generally represents Russia in the illustrated comic publications of Europe, the thought, perhaps, not unnaturally, occurs to us, in these times of extending empire, that the honey-loving bear may not inappropriately represent the national character. Next to the bear the wolf is one of the commonest wild animals in Russia. Unless it sallies forth as one of a large pack, it is generally a great coward, and instances are common, in which the peasant will attack it with no heavier weapon than a whip or a stick, and beat it off.

Thirty-six hours' continuous journey by express

brings us to the banks of the broad, and beautiful, and winding Dnieper, the 'Borysthenes' of the classics, and after crossing it by the Nicholas Suspension Bridge, one of the greatest triumphs of modern engineering art, 6755 feet in length, and erected between the years 1848 and 1855, at a cost of £375,000, by one of our fellow-countrymen, Mr. Charles Vignoles, in a few minutes we draw up at the railway station of Kief, one of the most ancient, interesting, sunny, and beautiful cities in all the Russias, Little, White, and Great. Kief is situated in a country, which, from time immemorial, has been a land flowing with milk and honey, and it is one of the oldest towns in Europe. Its authentic history begins at a very early period, and it has experienced great and innumerable changes of fortune. Christianity was first introduced into Russia at Kief, under the Grand-Duke Vladimir, in the tenth century, and from that time until the present, it has been called 'the Jerusalem of Russia,' or 'the Holy City of Holy Russia.' An ugly monument, erected about seventy-five years ago by the Governor-General of the province, who happened to be an Englishman, marks the spot where the initial rite of Christianity was administered to the children of the newly-converted Duke, and to many of his subjects. The baptismal pool lies immediately to the south of this architectural failure, which displeased the Emperor Alexander the First, so much,

indeed, that he removed the Governor, and it is supplied by a spring whose waters are slightly ferruginous. The waters of this spring possess a sacred value in the eyes of all orthodox Russians. In the eleventh century, the city is said to have contained no fewer than four hundred churches within its walls. It has been twice the scene of Tartar invasion and ravage. Intestine commotion and war have caused it more than once to change masters. Eight hundred years ago it was almost entirely consumed by fire, and annexed to Poland in the fourteenth century : it was finally attached to Russia in 1667. Kief to-day has a population of 100,000, and is the seat of government for the three south-western provinces of Volhynia, Kief, and Podolia, which among them have a population of six millions.

The district of which Kief is the centre and capital, was originally called the 'Ukraine,' or border country, and formed the cradle of the once nomadic or semi-nomadic Cossacks, the far-famed, and, like the German Uhlans, the modern eyes and ears of the Russian army. I have already alluded to the fertility of this part of the empire ; and in addition to its vast corn stores, I may add that it is renowned for its growth of beet-root, which is cultivated for purposes of sugar-making. Thousands of the peasantry are employed in this growth and manufacture, and during the greater part of February in each year, when the large proprietors of land

come into Kief, to make contracts for supplying beet-root sugar, and grain, beds at the principal hotels are hardly to be had for love or money. The situation of the town is good, on a bank, rising high above the waters of the Dnieper. Strictly speaking, it consists of three towns, standing on an undulating plateau, and abounds in attractions, natural, ecclesiastical, military, and civil, quite enough to make it an agreeable place of residence, and a delightful city to visit.

When at Nijni, I went into one of the large stores for purposes of inspection. In the course of conversation with the courteous merchant, I happened to say that I was returning to England by Kief and Warsaw. 'Oh, you are going to Kief,' said he; 'then I shall give you my card, and you must call for my partner there; his wife is English.' Accordingly, I called upon this gentleman, who very kindly left his place of business, conducted me through the principal parts of the town, and the beautiful gardens belonging to one of the Professors in the University, who permits his fellow-citizens to use them, and then took me to his house and introduced me to his wife. This lady originally belonged to Edinburgh, but had lived with her family for many years in Warsaw before coming to reside in Kief.

Many of the churches in Kief—there are sixty of them—are highly interesting from an ecclesiastical and archæological point of view. The Cathedral of

St. Sophia, built upon the model of the celebrated church of the same name at Constantinople, contains some very ancient and interesting frescoes; that of St. Andrew possesses a rich and elegant interior, and, from the lofty terrace on which it stands, a commanding view is to be had of the whole of the town, and the far-reaching and fertile champaign. The Bratski Monastery, principally built by the far-famed and ill-fortuned Mazeppa, contains an image of the Virgin, who is said to have performed the miraculous feat of bleeding from a wound, inflicted on her cheek by a Tartar spear; but the most interesting sight in Kief, and one to see which alone, the city is worth visiting, is the renowned 'Lavra' or Pecherskoi Monastery.

In Russia, although there are many 'monastirs,' or monastic establishments, there are only four monasteries, or 'Lavras,' as they are called, that is, the seat of a Metropolitan. The Lavra at Kief is the first of the four in rank, and the most ancient in origin. It is upwards of eight hundred years old. It was my good fortune to visit all the four Lavras in Russia.

At St. Petersburg there is that of St. Alexander Nevski, rich in royal presents, domestic and foreign, abounding in the most famous antiquities of Russia, literary and otherwise, and containing in the crypt of one of the churches attached to it, the tombs of some of the greatest members of illustrious

families. The cemetery attached to this church is a sort of 'Campo Santo,' for the rich and titled Russians, and large sums of money are paid for permission to bury their dead in this holy ground. It has a forlorn and untidy appearance, and the graves are so close together that no refinement of landscape-gardening could possibly be introduced. Above many of the flat tombstones, which it is believed were originally placed in this position for the purpose of keeping down the dead, there is often to be seen, graven in marble, the favourite Russo-Greek emblem, of the anchor at the foot of the cross, which, when taken in connection with the love and devotion that has raised the monumental stone, brings into conjunction those sweet Christian graces concerning which the Apostle to the Gentiles writes: 'And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three; but the greatest of these is Charity.' The singing in this monastery is the finest in the capital, and invariably attracts a fashionable congregation. I was present at service one afternoon, and was greatly impressed by it; but the manner in which the student choristers behaved, while the lessons were being read, whispering, talking, smudging, and pushing, was reprehensible to a degree. About sixty monks are attached to this Lavra, and they superintend an ecclesiastical academy. The Lavra at Moscow may be passed by without any particular notice, because of the renown of its fellows at Troitsa and Kief.

The monastery of Troitsa, the Canterbury of Russia, is forty-five miles from Moscow. I spent a day at it. This Lavra is dedicated to St. Sergius, and was established in the fourteenth century. Fired with the fame of its great wealth, a part of Napoleon's army set out to sack it during the invasion in 1812; but when they had got half way there they had to return. Matters were not going well at Moscow with the once boy-lieutenant of artillery. In this arrested military promenade, they resembled the famous general, who, 'with his hundred men, marched up the hill and down again.' The walls of the Troitsa Monastery are stupendous to look upon, being 4500 feet long, from thirty to fifty feet high, and twenty feet thick. Peter the Great and his brother John twice took refuge within its walls, when the troops mutinied against them. At one time no fewer than thirty monastirs were attached to it, and one hundred years ago it was the possessor of 106,000 male serfs. Its wealth is consequently very great. The shrine of the patron saint, made of pure silver, weighs 936 lbs. This is to be found in the Cathedral of the Trinity, one of the ten churches within the Monastery. The body of St. Sergius, wrapped in the most costly and embroidered silks, is exposed to view during the service; a small round hole in the silk allows a portion of the blackened skull to be seen, and to this shrine and skull, hundreds of the Orthodox faith make a pilgrimage from day to day; peer and

peasant, and the Emperor when he comes that way, kissing the skull, and prostrating themselves before the shrine with the utmost reverence. The sacristy contains the most sacred and valued relics, and, among others, not a few remains of the Holy Apostles, and memorials of our Blessed Redeemer's passion and death, to which, with our matter-of-fact Western notions, we should decidedly feel inclined to attach the epithet—'*soi-disant*.' The holy pictures and altar-screen are rich in precious stones.

At morning service in this church, I saw the elements of Communion bread and wine administered to an infant only a few days old. I witnessed this ceremony thrice when in Russia. In the Greek Church, the bread and wine at the Communion are mixed in a golden chalice, and the administering priest, taking a small spoon, with a long handle, gives a portion of the sacred emblems to each communicant. In the present instance he did the same, the mother meanwhile holding the child. This Infant Communion being one of the rites of the Greek Church, the Canon Law humanely orders the wine to be largely mingled with water before the tender babe receives the elements.

When I visited Troitsa, the shrine of St. Sergius was crowded with pilgrims, many of them wandering beggars, some of whom most probably had begged their way for hundreds of miles, in order that they might carry about with them, to the end of their days,

that odour of sanctity which a pilgrimage to so famous a shrine invariably confers. There they were, with birch-bark shoes, rosary, wallet, staff, and drinking-tin, and poor but warm clothing. They were all prim and clean, for it is an excellent and wholesome law of the Lavra, that all belonging to the mendicant order of pilgrims must wash their clothes and belongings, and take the bath themselves, before they approach the shrine. Some of them looked like 'sturdy beggars,' whom you would not exactly care to meet on a dark night, unless you had a good stout oaken cudgel in your possession ; others of them were meek and humble-looking, and apparently entirely absorbed in their devotions. Going into one of the side-chapels, where a deacon was officiating, I there saw scores of the pilgrims, take out bits of rags from inner and secret pockets, and, after undoing many knots, bring to the light of day a few silver coins and small pieces of paper, the last apparently certificates, granted by the priest of some far-distant parish. The money, with the certificate, they gave to the deacon, who laid them on the altar, and, after censuring them, chanted a short prayer. The worshippers stood around, crossing themselves while this was being done, and then they pressed forward to the shrine to begin their protracted devotions. The crowd and crush here was very great, and it occurred to me that one or two of Rimmel's perfume fountains, or half-a-dozen of his

spray-distributors, would have been a decided improvement, alike from an æsthetic and a sanitary point of view.

One of the features of the pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Sergius, is the procession to the monkish buttery. I took my place, as a pilgrim, in the ranks. Looking over the shoulders of those who went before me, I noticed that when they got up to the long counter in the low-roofed room, each man and woman received a large slice of rye-bread, gratis, which they forthwith sprinkled with salt lying on the counter, and began to eat. The bread was tempting in my eyes, as it was too early to get breakfast before leaving Moscow, and I had had nothing to eat all morning beyond a pocketful of apples. Accordingly, I flung down a ten-kopeck piece before the well-favoured and well-conditioned monkish butler; he gave one glance at me, and pushed two slices my way. I sprinkled them with salt, consumed one of them in a twinkling, and brought a portion of the second home with me, to serve as a lasting memorial of the fact, that once upon a time, I, a humble Protestant Englishman, had been a pilgrim to the shrine of St. Sergius.

Another sight at this Lavra was the monks at dinner in their large refectory. They marched up the hall in a body, and took their seats at two long tables, the chiefs of the establishment sitting at a cross table. After grace was sung, the reader stood out, and read a portion of a devotional book, pro-

bably the life of some saint, while the monks fell to with a will, upon plentiful and appetising soup, meat, and black bread. Dinner over, grace was again sung, and out they streamed, laughing and talking, as happy as schoolboys. Had I desired, the hospitable ordinance of the Monastery would have allowed me to sit alongside the monks, and participate in the dinner; but the black bread and apples had blunted the keen edge of my hunger, and I preferred, with their kind permission, to stand within the doorway and observe what was going on. Dinner over, I visited the studio, and bought a few photographs from a monk artist, among others, that of the rector of the priestly academy in the Lavra, who is one of the best men, and the most erudite of scholars in the Orthodox Church.

After purchasing a few cheap pilgrims' tokens, and getting out of the Monastery, although not without some difficulty, because of the throng of maimed and miserable beggars, who whined for alms in a piteous and utterly distracting monotone, I drove to Gethsemane, or 'The Skit,' a monkish retreat. There are catacombs here containing cells, where the monks who are fulfilling vows, remain secluded from any intercourse with man, and also from the sweet light of day, during the time the vow lasts. Some of them even go so far as voluntarily to immure themselves in these damp and unwholesome caverns, that they may the better win the favour of Heaven, until death

mercifully comes and frees the imprisoned soul from what seems a double prison. The only aperture is a small hole about six inches square, through which the food is put by a monk, who performs his work in silence. The thought of this miserable infatuation sent a shudder through me, and so inspired me with something like fear—for all the surroundings of the retreat were gloomy in the extreme,—that I was right glad to get away from it, and jumping into my drosky, I first called out to the Isvostchik, 'Skoréi,'—hurry quick; and then 'Poshol Skoréi,'—drive faster. He did as I bade him, and in gratitude for getting an exhilarating gallop, I gave him, evidently to his surprise, twenty kopecks more than we had struck a bargain for. In the vicinity of the Troitsa Lavra, and over the door of an archbishop's house, there is written an expressive proverb, which may serve as a useful hint, not only to pilgrims to the shrine of St. Sergius, but to visitors wherever they go: 'Let not him who comes in here carry out the dirt that he finds within.'

When returning from Troitsa to Moscow, I happened to travel by the same train as the Metropolitan of this Lavra, and as soon as, attended by a number of ecclesiastical dignitaries, he left the railway carriage, and was conducted in his half-blind and venerable age, to the private carriage awaiting him outside, such a scene of reverence occurred as I had never before witnessed. Passengers, peasants, labourers,

drotsky-drivers and passers-by, all flocked together in a crowd, somewhat like the innumerable pigeons, when they are fed outside the walls of the Kremlin, and beseechingly begged to be allowed to kiss his hand. The aged Metropolitan kindly held it out for the whole of the distance he had to walk; when, once assisted into his carriage, the white silk blinds were drawn down, he drove off, the admiring worshippers crossed themselves once more, and in another moment each one went his own way.

The Lavra at Kief, I have already stated, is the most ancient and famous of the four; but as one of these establishments is very like all the rest, after the description I have given of the monastery at Troitsa, it is not necessary that I should do more than indicate its leading features. It stands within an immense fortress, and the principal cathedral belonging to it, that of the Ascension of the Virgin of Pechersk, is approached by a noble avenue, well shaded with poplars. The houses of the brotherhood, sunny and comfortable-looking dwellings, are ranged on either side of this avenue. The interior of the cathedral is resplendent with barbaric gold and precious stones. It was here that I saw a service performed, somewhat similar to that in St. Isaac's at St. Petersburg, a description of which is given in our second chapter.

In connection with the Lavra at Kief, there are the renowned catacombs of St. Anthony, the founder

of the monastery. They are excavations in the limestone cliff overhanging the Dnieper. I visited these catacombs. In a large chapel at the entrance to them, monkish masons, and carpenters, and fresco-workers, and painters, were busily engaged on a lofty scaffold in the work of repair and decoration. Their industrious and loving toil very vividly recalled to my remembrance a famous painting of monkish builders, which appeared on the walls of the Royal Academy a few years ago. The passage into the catacombs is high, but narrow, and each visitor carries a lighted candle. Seventy-three bodies of the most famous of the monks are deposited in recesses, in open coffins, on either side of the passage, and it is the regulation thing with pilgrims to this shrine, to kiss the forehead of each or a number of them, and deposit money—a kopeck or more, according to circumstances—on the body. This, the monks, who during the morning hours are always conducting service in the catacombs, appropriate, as payment for saying prayers for the dead. Here, as in the 'Skit' at Troitsa, are to be seen the cells of monks, who at a former period immured themselves, and were thus devoted to a living death, the better to gain the kingdom of heaven. The pilgrims to the shrine and catacombs at Kief exceed 200,000 annually. They come from all parts of the empire, and some of them beg their way even from Archangel, on the shores of the far Northern White Sea.

They are fed gratis for three days, and allowed to remain within the walls of the monastery for two weeks.

Issuing from the catacombs, an exceedingly long and wide staircase conducts to the Lavra platform, and the walls are lined with hundreds of poor, blind, halt, maimed, and withered,—in a word, with afflicted humanity of every description,—pointing to their defects and sufferings, and in the name of Christ, craving alms. Ah! how often did I think, when in this country, what multitudes of sufferers Russia could have collected round the blessed Saviour had He still been on earth, healing, as was His gracious wont, diseases of every kind. How much to be regretted that the sweet and simple truths of the Gospel, which in themselves give eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, are veiled, yea, even shrouded, as in the Greek Church, by so much that is superstitious! Let us hope that the day is fast hastening, when in mighty Russia, that Gospel shall be declared with power, which teaches the Saviour's words, saying, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

It is unnecessary to say that the persons living in these monasteries are monks, or, as they are commonly called, 'The Black Clergy.' They are distinguished by this name from the regular or parish

priests, who are known as 'The White Clergy.' But there is a further, and that a most significant, difference between the two orders. The monks are celibates; the parish priests, without exception, must be married before ordination. The bishop of the diocese generally finds wives for his clergy, and as they are only permitted to have one wife, that is, to be married once, in the Greek Church, it may be taken for granted that the Russian priests, as a rule, prove affectionate and attentive husbands. The wife of the priest is often only a little above a peasant in rank and education. There was a time, not so long ago, when the parish priest had to leave his cure, and retire into a monastery whenever his wife died, but that law has now been annulled. The parish priests are called 'Popes,' but the Greek, unlike the Latin Church, does not recognise the authority of a Supreme Pontiff. The monks are the aristocracy of the priesthood, and while they occupy the best positions, they are at the same time the best educated among the clergy. As a rule, with of course numerous notable exceptions, in so vast a body of men—for the Russian clergy, with their families, number about 650,000 persons,—the parish priests are men of indifferent education, while some of them are able to do little more than read the service. The monks give laws to the Church through the Holy Synod, which permanently sits in the capital. The Emperor is the head of the Synod.

A bitter, yea, even a deadly feud, has long raged between the black and white clergy, the regular priests feeling themselves utterly ignored by sitting beneath the shadow of the monks; and it is generally believed that at no very distant future, the monkish orders will have their excessive powers and high position greatly restricted, many of the monasteries being suppressed, and their occupants turned out of haunts of sloth and self-indulgence, and sent into the world to work like men. Some such change is much to be desiderated, not only because it would tend to repress that lazy mendicancy which is so great a curse to Russia, but also because the regular clergy would then occupy a better position, and would naturally live more active and worthy lives than many of them now do. The personal character of many of the parish priests is held in very low esteem. They have a sad reputation for loving vodka, and instances are known, where the peasants have been seen carting the drunk priest to prison on the Saturday, in order, as they said, to get him sober for Sunday. In such cases as these the time-honoured proverb, 'Like priest, like people,' will certainly not hold good. But the priest, unless he is a man of some mental calibre, is sorely tempted to fall into dissipated habits. He carries round the sacred pictures to the houses of all his parishioners once a year, for the purpose of blessing them, and then, in addition to the fee, which he gladly pockets, he is

expected to partake of drink in every house. So far as the drink is concerned, some such custom as this used to maintain in our own country not so very long ago; when the clergy visited their flocks they also were expected to partake of cheer, and thus, many of our spiritual guides became cultivated tipplers. It was mistaken and even brutal hospitality.

A Russian parish, as a rule, comprises, upon the authority of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, one thousand males; but in towns the number is greater. Females are not counted in the returns made to the Government. Every Russian must take the Communion once a year, and good Christians, as they are called, do this four times. The peasants are remarkably attentive to their religious duties, and treat the priest with no end of reverence so long as he is discharging the duties of his office, but outside the church they laugh at him, and make game of him. Two clergymen are invariably attached to each church and parish, a priest and a deacon. The deacons are *literates*; they might be called *illiterates*. The services are frequent, and are conducted with great regularity, the clergy attending so carefully to the proprieties of 'office,' that if the priest takes too much vodka over-night, the deacon manages to keep sober, and *vice versâ*. The priests are State officials, and are but poorly paid. From the Government they receive on an average £10 per annum, which sum, with the fees they get at marriages and feasts, when

they bless the houses and say masses, etc., brings their income up to about £150 per annum. This includes house and fuel. The Church-service is performed in the Old Slavonic tongue, and consequently many of the worshippers know as little of what is said, as they do in that section of the Western Church where the Liturgy is read in Latin. The Russians, however, learn in time, what significance is to be attached to the different parts of the service, and carry themselves accordingly. Since the Act of Emancipation was passed, the peasants do not attend church so regularly as formerly, because of the lazy, careless, and indifferent lives of many of the priests.

The Russian priest has two great bugbears—new saints, and the bishop. New saints endanger his fees, and the bishop keeps his eye upon him. The Russian peasant has a singular fondness for getting devils cast out, which invariably assume the shape either of a dog or a magpie ; and when he is able to get up a good story, and secure the canonisation of some deceased worthy, who has appeared to him and helped him in his spiritual conflict, the picture is manufactured and placed in the parish church, to the great neglect of the shrines of other saints, and therefore to the detriment, in many instances, of the priest's pocket. So serious did this matter become some time ago, that the Synod has become very chary in gratifying the religious whims and fancies of the peasants. The

Russian Church does not allow anything graven with the workman's tool, as is the case in the Latin Church ; all objects of worship and reverence must be on a flat surface, hence the numerous pictures which adorn the walls of the churches.

And then the priest has a wholesome dread of his bishop, who makes a triennial visitation, and inquires into the life of his subordinate. Great preparations are made on these occasions, both in the church and parsonage, or in the house of some wealthy parishioner, to receive the bishop well. Champagne is *de rigueur*, the bishop insisting on this foaming cup ; but still it sometimes happens that all possible attentions will not avert the episcopal displeasure and the punishment that follows. If the priest has been too often, and open, and deep in his cups, he may be suspended, or even removed from his parish, and kicked downstairs, by being promoted to some position in a convent, which the poor man looks upon as equivalent to being broken for life. The priest nevertheless occasionally gets the better of the bishop after all. In one instance, for example, the bishop ordered the drunken parish priest to get him to the convent, but the worthy bacchanal refused to go, saying he would rather stay and break stones on the roads, thus bringing a new disgrace upon his profession. This artful strategy secured him another three years of grace. With all his faults, and they are many, there is this to be said for the Russian priest, that he is

one with the people, never against them, but always for them, and this is a great thing in these times of priestly arrogance and assumption.

The Russian Church, among other distinctive tenets, does not admit the *Filioque* in the procession of the Holy Ghost.

Russia, which has fifty millions of her people attached to the Russo-Greek Church, has no fewer than fifteen millions dissenting from it, although, with mole-like blindness they are only officially computed at one million. Of these dissenters, the most numerous and influential are the Old Believers. These men hold that since the time of Peter the Great, and the Archimandrite Nikon, when Peter's rigid despotism and Western proclivities, terrified and disgusted so many of his subjects, and Nikon was his able and willing henchman, and when numerous changes were introduced into the ritual, the Russian Church has become Antichrist. It is only just to state that the ecclesiastical changes introduced by Nikon were all in the direction of an ancient and wellnigh forgotten conservatism, rather than in that of a modernising liberalism. Notwithstanding this, the very best members of the Orthodox Church seceded, and down to this day they are known as the Old Believers. Whatever is modern they dislike exceedingly. They take neither vodka, tea, nor coffee. Potatoes are a forbidden esculent, and beyond everything, tobacco is abhorred. Until the last few years they

were laid under great civil disabilities, but these are now happily removed. Moscow is their stronghold, and the Slav merchants there are their leaders. They hold together, and assist each other like Jews and freemasons. They have literally proved too strong for a conforming-loving Government, just as the Scotch and English Nonconformists have done. It is strongly suspected that there is a secret sympathy with them, on the part of the best men of the Orthodox faith. While many of the Orthodox are either formalists or nothing, the Old Believers are inwardly devout, and strong with the strength of a deep conviction. They possess the wealth both of town and country, but, unfortunately for them at present, their persistent separation has kept them from being properly educated. Time, however, will soon cure this evil. People say that when the present Czarevitch goes to the throne, he will grant a constitution to Russia, and that then the Old Believers will become a great party, and get the upper hand in Church and State. That Russia should get a constitution we can only heartily desire, and if, along with it, these earnest men are brought forward to power, they may, under Providence, be the means of conferring great benefits and liberties on Russia. In addition to the Old Believers, there are innumerable sects of dissenters, commonly known as the heretics.

One of these, the 'Molokâni,' which literally means the milk-drinkers—they rigidly abstain from ardent

spirits,—is stated by Wallace, in his gigantic work on Russia, to bear some superficial resemblance to Presbyterianism, so far as doctrine goes. On several occasions he spoke to peasants, whom he took for Molokâns, about a country where the people interpreted the Scriptures for themselves, had no bishops, considered the veneration of Ikons as idolatry, and annually sent deputies to an assembly in which all Church matters were freely and publicly discussed, and at once he had to answer a whole volley of questions. ‘Where is that country?’ ‘Is it to the east or to the west?’—Russian peasants, like many other people who are far above the humble peasant’s lot, are all at sea in the matter of geography,—‘Is it very far away?’ ‘If our presbyter could only hear all that!’ These Molokâni are better housed and clad, more punctual in the payment of their taxes, and, in a word, more prosperous, than their neighbouring peasants of the Orthodox faith, and are reported as being quiet, decent, and sober people. Many of the dissenters are treated by the Government with great severity, and I notice that about this time, some hundreds of the sect called ‘Stundists,’ are to be put upon their trial at Odessa. It is a sufficient proof of the fact that there is no ‘Habeas Corpus’ Act in Russia, when I state that, these inoffensive and Bible-loving men have been in prison, untried, between two and three years, and that only because they conscientiously dissent from the national Russo-Greek

Church, and prefer a simple and scriptural service of their own. Others of the sects, as for example the 'Skoptsi,' or the Mutilated, practise their obscene rites in secret, and embrace tenets so entirely subversive of morality and government, that the authorities do what they can to suppress them. The Russian peasants, however, are very cunning, and thus they generally manage to escape detection and punishment. One of the worst features about some of these sects is that, although they hate the Orthodox Church, they attend it, taking part in all the services, and this for the purpose of concealment. Duplicity, even although adopted to escape severe punishment, must always be bad, but particularly so when the point in question is a matter of faith and religion.

The work of the British Protestants in Russia is being vigorously pushed forward, and is countenanced both by the Government, and, let it be said to their praise, even by the clergy. The Holy Synod grants permission with the utmost promptitude for fresh editions of the Scriptures to be printed. The British and Foreign Bible Society has depôts at St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Odessa. I visited those in the two first-mentioned cities, and was highly gratified with the reports I received, as to the success which the distribution of the Scriptures is meeting with. The Rev. William Nicholson, some years ago a Congregational minister at Amble, in Northumberland, is the principal agent of the Society in Russia, and what

between his untiring energy and his linguistic gifts, he is meeting with very great encouragement. The entire Bible, or portions of it, is translated into sixty of the different languages spoken in the Russian dominions, and is circulated by book-hawkers and others. Mr. Nobbs, the English banker, and one of the directors of the Society in St. Petersburg, furnished me with some very interesting statistics. 452,548 copies and portions of the Scriptures were sold and given away last year by the St. Petersburg depôt, and 230,322 by the depôt at Odessa. Upwards of 43,000 Scriptures were distributed gratis among the sick and wounded soldiers. By the permission of the Minister of Education, tracts and religious pamphlets are sent free by post, to several thousands of the communal schools, at short intervals. The taste of the people for this literature is growing, and their desire to receive the Scriptures is very great, a desire which, as I have already said, the majority of the clergy foster rather than thwart. This is very different from the state of matters in the Latin Church, where the priests, instead of encouraging, discountenance; and in many cases frown upon, and forbid the study of the Book which endureth for ever, and is a lamp unto the feet and a light unto the path. During the late war, soldiers and officers eagerly bought up the stocks of New Testaments and portions, sent from time to time to the Danubian Provinces, to the extent of 56,114 copies. Four city missionaries are now

employed in the capital, and the result produced by the labours of a well-known English nobleman, holding evangelical principles—Lord Radstock, who crowded out the St. Petersburg drawing-rooms two winters ago,—has been such, that the Bible Society meets with great encouragement from some of the very best portions of society, the members of which, in their private life, exert no small influence for good. Along with Mr. Nobbs, I called upon the Rev. Mr. Hall, the minister of the British and American Congregational Church, and he also furnished me with some interesting statements as to his special work in the capital. These may appear great things, and they are all that, but after all it is only the day of small things for evangelical truth in mighty Russia, for as yet there are whole provinces in this vast empire, which are destitute of the Scriptures, while in others they are but scantily supplied. Nevertheless, these noble pioneers, who are so faithfully working on, through the darkness of the moral night to the dawn of a glorious day, when they see what He, who holds the hearts of all men in His hand, has enabled and still enables them to do, may well thank God and take courage.¹

In St. Petersburg, Moscow, and the north of Russia, I saw but few soldiers for so great a military

¹ No two chapters in the last Annual Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society are more interesting than those upon North and South Russia.

empire ; there seemed to be no more than was required for garrison duty. The reason was that, the army was still across the Danube, and to the south of the Balkans, or had not yet returned so far north from the seat of the late war. This absence of the military, however, in the beginning of my visit to Russia, was amply compensated for when it was pretty well through, by the sight I had, for no fewer than four days in succession, of the return of the three branches of the Guard,—cavalry, infantry, and artillery. Shortly after leaving Moscow the military trains began to move north. After leaving Kief for Warsaw they were moving west, and owing to the lengthy stoppages at the railway stations, I had ample opportunity for observing the flower of the Russian army. The officers—many of whom travelled from Kief in the same train that I did—were mostly tall, big, and handsome men, dressed in the long grey greatcoat, and wearing a flat black cap. They invariably received the most precise and deferential salutations from the railway officials. A non-military people, our officers would look in vain for these salutes in England, even when travelling on duty ; as it is, they neither would care to have them, nor could expect to get them, seeing they like best to travel and show themselves in mufti. Kief was literally filled with officers, and at least a dozen soldier-servants stood or sat in attendance at the doors of the rooms, along the lengthy corridor of the Grand Hotel, where I had

my apartment. These officers were there under the most agreeable circumstances, for not only had they returned in safety from the seat of war,—some of them, however, were mutilated, and carried an empty sleeve, or walked slowly along with the aid of a crutch,—but their wives and families had come thus far south, to meet them and greet them with a great and loving joy. I spent a couple of hours in a public garden, seeing husbands and wives and children promenading, and never since the return of our Guards after the Crimean war, and the distribution of medals in Hyde Park, had I witnessed such sunlit faces, glorified with a whole heaven of bliss.

Kief was also filled with non-commissioned officers and men, who were seen to the best advantage when I encountered them in the Catacombs of St. Anthony, and stood and watched them worshipping before his shrine in the gorgeous Lavra. In the Catacombs, every soldier appeared to kiss the forehead of the seventy-three monks lying in the odour of sanctity, and occasionally, two or three kopecks were laid on the silk-shrouded breast. Nor were the halt and the maimed forgotten by them, when they walked up the long staircase. The Russian Lazarus was in clover while the Guards were in Kief, after their return from San Stefano. But the sight of sights was that in the Lavra ; and if I ever saw gratitude, devotion, and spiritual joy all together, imprinted on the human countenance, it was on the sun-blackened faces of

these strong-featured Muscovites, when they returned thanks to 'Our Great Lady, and her Divine Son,' for watching over them in the fever-stricken swamp, the bullet-swept field, and the deep snows and terrible frosts of the Balkan range, and for bringing them in safety to the great shrine of the Orthodox faith, in the Jerusalem of holy Russia.

Between Kief and Warsaw I encountered the Guard under every desirable circumstance. Sometimes they were drawn up on the long platform at the stations, resting themselves, with the band playing national airs, while the officers were partaking of the midday breakfast in the admirably-appointed buffets. Again, they were to be seen by the side of the railway, in a field near a station, where, the military train having halted, they got out and camped on the bare ground all night, wrapping themselves up in their long cloaks, and when the sun was risen some degrees above the horizon, cooking their breakfast in the camp-kettles, mending sadly dilapidated uniforms with all the deftness of a soldier, and putting things to rights for a further move onward; while they were often to be seen sitting in the military wagons singing their patriotic songs. The singing was a great treat. The 'maestro' of the company would sing a solo verse to a tune pitched on a high key, in a soft sweet voice, and then his fellows burst out into a sharp ringing chorus, while one of the number stamped on the carriage floor.

with a long pole, decorated at the top with gay ribbons, and having twenty or thirty small bells attached to it. Nor were Red Cross trains wanting, fitted up with every comfort, and conveying the sick and wounded, who were waited upon by medical officers. These gentlemen were assisted by a staff of young women, clad in uniform, who had been sent from a number of the Government schools for this purpose.

What these brave men and their comrades in arms suffered during the late war will never be known. To begin with, a sufficient number of soldiers was never sent to the front, and this over-taxed the strength of the men in the field. The War Office boasted that it had 600,000 men all ready for the campaign, but at no one time during the war was there ever a greater number than 250,000 under arms in Turkey. And then, when the men were sick and wounded, they were not properly attended to in many of the military hospitals. In the main, this was not owing to any lack of skill or sympathy on the part of the medical staff, but resulted from that terrible system of bribery, which is a running sore in every department of the Russian Government Service. It is commonly reported in Russia, that one who stands on the very steps of the throne is the greatest bribe-receiver in the whole Empire. The Government pays immensely for all it purchases, and then when it has done this, incendiarism and fraud very frequently cause it to pay twice over. Vast stores of hay, during the late war,

were purposely allowed to rot, that fresh contracts might be advertised. On one occasion, when the chief medical authorities came to visit the hospitals at the seat of war, application was made to the Deaconesses of the *Kaiserswerth* Institution for a few bottles of quinine. They were given, a portion of the contents was taken out, and then the bottles were filled up with chalk. This was to make the invaluable febrifuge go further. The reason for the application was that, through bribe-taking, the boxes despatched to the hospitals, labelled 'Quinine,' were either sent off empty, or filled with rubbish. Such shameful tampering with life and health as this, was enough to destroy the *morale* of any army. The War Office admits a loss of 100,000 men; but those who were behind the scenes know it was much nearer 300,000.

The liberality shown by the inhabitants of the capital to the *Kaiserswerth* hospital was something wonderful. In addition to large sums of money,—35,000 roubles are still left over, the hotels sent candle-ends, which were very valuable when the nights grew long; and wines, groceries, and all kinds of necessaries and luxuries, were freely offered. This benevolence was much better expended on the Deaconesses' Institution, than that which furnished General Tchernaiëff with such large sums of money during the Servian war. Most of that was spent on champagne-breakfasts and feasting.

During the late war, the Russian officers and

generals were very jealous of the numerous Germans in the army. One of them is reported to have said, when he heard that a German general had taken his division into Plevna, before Osman Pasha came with his spade and rifle, and made a mighty fortress out of an open place, 'Oh, he has got into Plevna, has he? Let us see how he will get out.' This jealousy at one time greatly endangered the very existence of the Russian army in Bulgaria, and trustworthy narrators tell with something like a shudder, how that, had the Turks pressed forward on one occasion, the Russians must have been driven across, or even into the Danube. But if the German generals were snubbed, the German comic publications brought them their revenge. They constantly lampooned the Russian commanders, and one of the most telling cartoons represented the Russian general, officer, and soldier as follows:—The soldier with the head of a lion; the officer with the head of an ass; the general without any head at all.

The pay of the Russian soldier is miserably small, amounting, in the case of the linesmen, only to two roubles and sixteen kopecks, or, at the present rate of exchange, to less than six shillings per annum. In addition to this scanty, or rather infinitesimal small pay, each man draws half a pound of meat and three pounds of bread per diem, and he gets a complete uniform once in two years. The boots are anything rather than A1. The pay of a captain and colonel runs between eight hundred and one thousand

roubles per annum. This is much too small for the wants of any single gentleman in Russia, where living, and house-rent, and fuel are very expensive. What then must be the impoverished condition of a married officer, unless he has private means? The fact is, town expenses ruin the officers. With tea at six shillings per lb., sugar at one shilling, house-rent and fuel costing some hundreds of roubles, and other things in like proportion, most of them will not know where to turn, you will say. O yes, but they do. Officers and men get double pay, double rations, double everything, as soon as war is proclaimed. Accordingly they pant for the field, from the staff down to the ranks, and, founded as the empire at present is, on a military basis, fighting almost seems to be a necessary thing from time to time. The conscript age begins with the twenty-first year, and each peasant is liable to five annual drawings before he can reckon himself scot-free. The consequence is that exceedingly few escape military service. There is a great want of officers in the Russian army. Now that the war in Turkey is over, every Russian you talk to, will tell you that his country, in spite of all the blood she has shed, has lost a great amount of prestige, while England, in spite of not having had a drop to shed, has won just as much as Russia has lost.

Poor Russia! she has many sorrows crushing down upon her devoted head at present. Her finances are minished and brought low. Only so

recently as the month of November, 1878, the semi-official *Journal de St. Petersbourg* said that, 'the war which has increased the paper currency by five hundred million uncovered notes, has added seventy millions in roubles to the annual interest on the National Debt. Retrenchment being impossible in any department, and least of all in the military, an increase of taxes and customs is contemplated. The tariff is to be raised once more by fifteen per cent. An income-tax is to be introduced, and the excise on spirits is to be considerably increased. Fresh imposts are to be levied on railway receipts, legacies, coal imports, tobacco imports, gold exports, and other articles, and the people are to be exhorted to improve the quality of agricultural exports, so as to render competition with America possible.' This is dark enough, but it may be asked, 'how are all these fresh taxes to be raised, now that war has impoverished the country, and half the merchants are bankrupt?'

Then, she is a divided house on the knotty subject of Panslavism, for while students, and professors, and literary men, and Moscow merchants, and ladies, are in favour of the movement, the Court party, and St. Petersburg to a man, are against it. Panslavism, as we know only too well, after all the bloodshed and excitement of the last three years, has for its object to unite all the Slav races under one great Slav head, that head being Russia. While still further, and worst of all, the sceptre of Socialism rears its murderous head in the

empire. The 'Nihilists,' as they are called, have existed in Russia for a considerable time, and when I state that the first article in their creed is, 'There is no God,' while among others that follow there are these, 'No priests,' 'No property,' 'No social ties,' and 'No hereafter,' I have said enough to show how dangerous the presence of such men, and particularly in the numbers in which they are to be found in Russia, must be. The last phase of this trouble began about two years ago, when a number of the students at the University of Kief mutinied against the authorities ; then Véra Zassoulitch, who shot General Troppau, and who is generally supposed to be confined in the casemates of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, at St. Petersburg, added fuel to the flame ; while last of all, the assassination of General Mezentsew, in the capital, a few weeks ago, has filled the nation with quaking hearts. I was in St. Petersburg at the time of this last Socialistic outbreak, and saw the spot where the head of the secret police was poniarded. A very uneasy feeling prevailed in the capital one night. It was reported that letters had been dropped in the streets, which, when read, stated that St. Petersburg was to be committed to the flames ; and on the very best authority, I learned that the troops were confined to barracks, and every precaution adopted to preserve the public safety. I shall never forget the fear displayed by a middle-aged American gentleman, when the news was reported in the reading-room of the

Angleterre, that the commune was likely to be raised that night. He shut up his diary, which he was writing, and with pale face and firm-set lips exclaimed, 'Please God, I shall be out of this country to-morrow.' The question repeatedly put to me in Russia was this: 'Have you any Socialists in England?' 'No,' I replied, 'we have many foolish men in our country, but none so wicked as that comes to.' Long may we be able to say as much! The first result produced by the murder of General Mezentsew, was that five hundred men were added at once to the police force, and six hundred persons, chiefly students and young women, put in prison; the next was that the police were permitted to enter any workshop, and search or seize whom they pleased; the third was that the law was made more strict, so far as it could reach the secret Socialist press; and the last that I have noticed, is that the Emperor, for purposes of personal safety, has surrounded himself with an extra body-guard of Circassians, both within his residence and out of doors. The truth is, the Russians are weary of an autocratic government, although they love the Czar with an intense love. They pant for a liberty which nature, and the rising aspiration of nations demands, but which they have not got. They are exhausted with wars and rumours of wars, and they clamour for peace, rest, a constitution, and the liberty and privileges which these national blessings would bring along with them. May they get them, and get them all, and get them soon!

As might be expected, Education is exceedingly defective in Russia at present, so far as the peasants are concerned ; but half a century of communal school-work will produce a mighty change in this respect. The Russian peasant is not the stupid and boorish fellow he is often supposed to be ; on the contrary, although his gait is lumbering, he is quick-witted, and ready to lay hold on opportunities, more particularly now that he is a freeman. Although so lately born to freedom, and its privileges, I question very much if he will be as slow to educate his children, when schools have been set up in every small community, as the peasants and humbler classes in some parts of England have been, and still are. Unfortunately, in spite of the existence of upwards of 15,000 communal schools, the school-master is still far from being abroad in Russia, and it is much to be doubted if more than one per cent. of the grown-up peasants can read and write. Unlike the clergy in our country, the Russian priests have no ambition to see their parishioners well educated, or even educated at all. If they only had one-tenth of the energy and spirit of their brethren in the West, a great step would be taken to bring about a better state of matters in this direction. Travelling through a country, the literary tastes and educational status, may be pretty fairly gauged by the presence or absence of newspaper-reading. In Russia there is hardly any reading on the railways. Boys sell newspapers at the great termini, but they are

only purchased by a select few ; even officers and merchants on a long journey seldom beguile the tedium of the transit, as every one does in England. During the twenty-four hours' journey between the capital and Moscow, I only saw two workmen reading a newspaper, when I looked into the third-class carriages ; but between Kursk and Kief, I saw, what we do not so very often witness in our country ; a gentleman—the master of the old nurse to whom I gave the sprig of mignonette—diligently kept on reading the second book of Livy. The upper classes and nobles are admirably educated, and their linguistic talents are so great, that most of them are as familiar with French and German as with their own tongue, while many speak English with great accuracy, and a most delightful accent. The best families retain the services of an English tutor or governess. There are seven Universities in the empire, and in every considerable town there is a gymnasium, in addition to public schools. It has often been said that there is no middle class in Russia, but this is scarcely correct, at least now. Scanty though the education may be, it is doing its work in many ways, and one of these is that, merchants and superior tradesmen, are beginning to form a guildry of their own. It is only in the towns, however, that this middle class is to be found.

The Russians have a reputation for being great drinkers, and those who know the country well, state that this marked feature of northern nations is

exceedingly pronounced ; but if we may take so great an authority as the *Quarterly Review* for a standard of reference, it is very clear that the pot cannot call the kettle black, so far as England goes. The *Quarterly* says that, while 25,000 die annually from the abuse of strong drink in Russia, 50,000 cut short their lives in this country by similar self-indulgence. As the population of England is only half that of Russia, it follows from this estimate that the mortality from strong drink among ourselves is three times greater than what it is among the Russians. The long fasts, and the annual feasts of the Church, requiring, as they do, that the people keep numerous holidays, foster drinking customs. If the Church, then, would only rise to her duty, she might speedily effect a great improvement. I did not see more than a dozen men lying drunk when I was in Russia : I saw some scores staggering and reeling in London, during the one afternoon and night I spent in it on my return. When the Russian peasant is felled to the ground by vodka, he lies where he falls, until the policeman or his friends pick him up, and carry him off. It would be dangerous for a stranger to touch him, as, should he die from the effects of his debauch, a long and troublesome police inquisition would follow, in which the good Samaritan might find himself suspected of having employed foul means. Russians are remarkably good-natured when drunk, and if three or four of them are together, they hug and kiss each other : 'Tam lo'ed him like a vera

brither.' The Russian ladies are not given to wine, and when they see the English governess take more than one glass at dinner, they do not like it, and the gentlemen talk.

Here is a fact for the witty Baronet who represents the city of Carlisle so admirably in the House of Commons, and whose jokes often cut, quite as much as they tell. Four years ago the Government, finding there were far too many public-houses in St. Petersburg, shut up one-third of them at a day's notice. No compensation was given to the publican whose occupation had so suddenly gone; all that was done, was just to give a fresh coat of paint to the houses unaffected by this Draconian decree. This was something like paternal government. Sir Wilfrid Lawson said some short time ago, that he was no way particularly wedded to his Permissive Bill, and that, as he kept telegraphic forms at his country seat at Brayton, as soon as he saw a better Bill draughted, he would telegraph up to the *Times*: 'Permissive Bill abandoned—a superior Bill introduced, by a superior person.' We have not a few patriots in these days, who are bold enough to say that our present Constitutional Government has made mince-meat of the British Constitution. Perhaps even Sir Wilfrid might be inclined to stay his hand, if the Constitutional party acted somewhat like the Russian Government in the case I have described, with this single addition, that no new licences should be granted.

In connection with the matter of drinking customs

in Russia, the following incident gratified me very greatly. At the table-d'hôte at Kief, an officer came in and took his seat by my side. He was bronzed with the sun, and worn by labour, and it occurred to me that he had just returned from Turkey, like so many of his neighbours. In a short time I broke the silence by asking him if this was so, and found I had not been mistaken. The following conversation then occurred :—‘What is your rank?’ ‘Doctor in the regiment of Finland, a portion of the Guard.’ ‘How long have you been in Turkey?’ ‘For twelve months.’ ‘Where have you been?’ At Gorny Dubnik, Ichtiman, Philippopolis, Adrianople, and San Stefano.’ ‘Have you lost many of your men?’ ‘One hundred killed, two hundred wounded at Gorny Dubnik; fewer at other places.’ ‘What was the ordinary health of your men?’ ‘Good, if it had not been for typhus, spotted and ordinary, which carried off many of our most valuable men. A number of the medical staff also went under with it.’ ‘Have you been wounded?’ ‘No, I was fortunate.’ ‘What sort of health have you enjoyed during these twelve months?’ ‘The very best of health,’—and pointing to a glass of water he was fingering, ‘I drink nothing beyond *tchai* (tea) and voda (water).’ ‘Good,’ I replied; ‘are there many officers in the Russian army like yourself?’ There came first upon this, the lifting up of the eyebrows, and the indescribable shrugging of the shoulders, and then the word, ‘No,’ uttered slowly. ‘No,’ he

again said, 'the constant call is for vodka (spirits), piva (beer), St. Julienne, cognac, and champagne.' This gentleman did me the compliment to take me for a German, and when I told him I was not that, he asked, 'Are you a Frenchman, then?' 'No,' I answered, 'I am an Englishman.' 'Ah, English!' he replied, and looked a good look.¹

It is a long journey between Kief and Warsaw, but I had no cause to complain of monotony. The transit of the Guard from Turkey, and my fellow-travellers, shortened the distance immensely. For five hours I travelled with two most charming ladies, Madame Claudine Engelhardt, and her sister, Fräulein Schiedemann, Russianised Germans. Madame Engelhardt's husband was a Colonel of Engineers, but instead of serving in the field, he was constantly employed in the technical department at St. Petersburg. This lady was going to the Paris Exhibition, and had left her three children on the estate near Kief. She had travelled in almost every European country except England; that was too *triste* and foggy. I told her if she came among us she would be agreeably disappointed. Switzerland was her great delight, as was natural, for who would not love the change from an unbroken plain to the land of peaks and mountains? She was a profound admirer of the

¹ Englishmen are neither very numerous nor very much beloved in Russia at present. I was the first of my countrymen who had been in the Grand Hotel at Kief for two years, and unless my fancy misled me, I was the observed of all observers. It is right to say that during the whole of my tour I never met with anything but the greatest courtesy and help.

Russian national party, and consequently full of invective against Lord Beaconsfield. The epithets applied to that scorn-proof and versatile statesman in Russia at present, are something to wonder at. To be told that her fellow-traveller was of the following of Mr. Gladstone, was to be received into high favour at once ; and as with this lady so it was everywhere within the Czar's dominions.

Madame Engelhardt noticed that I wore the costume of a clergyman, and was anxious, among many other things, to know about the English clergy. On my part, I was just as desirous to learn all I could, about religious life among the upper classes in Russia. She confessed only once a year, being descended from German parentage. Had she been a pure Russ, she might have done so oftener. When interrogated, as to whether her confessor ever put any awkward questions, she replied that he once asked her if she always did what her husband wanted her. 'And what answer did you give him?' I asked. 'No, I do not,' she replied, 'I sometimes like a little of my own way.' The penance for this little speech, and true wife-like dignity, was that she had to kneel to the ground before him fifty times in succession, crossing herself when doing so. When she got home she told her husband, who laughed, and said she ought not to have done it.

On Colonel Engelhardt's estate there was a church, seven versts from the mansion, which boasted of a so-called 'miraculous picture of our

Lady.' Some time ago his youngest son fell sick, and Madame vowed a vow that if his life was spared, she would make a pilgrimage to this church—on foot of course,—taking the child with her. The child happily did recover, and the pilgrimage was made in the following way : Madame, in her dainty Parisian bottines, walked—a very uncommon thing for a Russian lady to do ; the child, attended by the nurse, was driven in the carriage ; the grateful mother prayed, and offered her gift to the priest, after he had chanted the *Te Deum* ; and then—tell it not in Russia—instead of carrying out the vow to the utmost letter, she got into the carriage and was driven home. When I heard this story I thought to myself, 'Well, my dear Madame Engelhardt, if that was not exactly boiling the peas, it was something very like parboiling them.'

Fräulein Schiedemann was a highly intellectual girl, although perhaps not so brilliant as her sister. She was a student in medicine at the St Petersburg schools, and had already advanced one stage to her degree. Four sessions of study are required in order to receive the medical diploma. It is a very common thing for Russian ladies to study medicine. I travelled from Kazan to Nijni with a young lady, who, having a desire to make herself useful in life, had taught a school of eighty poor girls for some time, and was then on her way to the capital to begin the study of medicine.

Once into Poland, it is easy to see a great difference

between that country and Russia in many ways. The soil—it is sandy—is better cultivated, the cottages are neater, and more home-like ; the sheepskin coat finally disappears, and the peasants are less clumsy in the build, even though they may not be more active in their habits. Who shall sing the woes of Sarmatia? Not I. The Poles have suffered in many ways, but history will, and does testify, that they brought many of their many-multiplied evils in a great measure upon themselves. The nobles were in a state of constant feud, and the Roman Catholic Church treated the members of the Eastern Church with great severity. The population of Poland is between five and six millions, and rather better than four millions belong to the Latin Church. They are treated with great and undue rigour. It is hoped, and believed, however, that the growing terror of Socialism will secure greater toleration to the Roman Catholics than they at present enjoy. The Russian régime in Poland is exceedingly severe, and many of the brightest and most hopeful Poles lose the flower of their youth in prison and Siberia. Those sent to Siberia are not, as a rule, employed in the mines, but are interned in the towns, where they are allowed to employ themselves as they please. Many of them rise to positions of great trust, and acquire no little wealth. A considerable number teach, and because of the excellent education they give, it is said the Siberian populations are better educated than those in any other portion of the Czar's

dominions. It is right to say that all the Poles, if they speak the truth, do not wince under the Russian yoke. I travelled for a day and a night with a Polish Judge and his family, and this gentleman spoke in high terms of the Emperor and the Government. He told me that, since the little insurrection in 1862, as he called it, the people had become quieter and more contented than before. Nevertheless, Russia was anxious about Poland during the late war, and however much Russia proper might be drained of troops, Poland was kept well garrisoned, against any attempted rising. Poland is the Ireland of Russia, and a good deal more. I saw a splendid regiment of dragoons in Warsaw, which had been quartered there during the whole of the war. Cossacks—these jaunty, saucy-looking fellows—were as plentiful as blackberries in autumn. The city was *en fête* because of the return of the Guard, every house and public building displaying an array of bunting. This was *by invitation*, however, and not a spontaneous act of gratitude and joy. Russia was prepared to restore many forfeited privileges to Poland, and in fact had done so, when the insurrection of 1830 put an end to anything like further amelioration, and from that day down to the present time, the Russian rule has been rigorous. The Secret Police is so numerous, that a visitor to Poland cannot do better than remember the old lines—

‘Take care to whom you speak, and what you speak,
And when, and why, and where.’

An instance of the need of this care was related to me at Warsaw. When news came to that city of the fall of Plevna, a German waiter in the principal hotel chanced to say to his fellow-servants, 'That is bad news for Poland.' Next morning he received an *invitation* to pay a visit to the Police Court. Like a wise man, he accepted it at once, and when he stood before his worship, the following scene occurred: 'You have said that the fall of Plevna was bad for Poland?' 'No, I did not.' A door was immediately opened, when a fellow-waiter, with the cook of the hotel, stepped into the Court. They gave their evidence, and the magistrate's quick and concise decision was given in the following laconic terms, 'Cross the frontier immediately.'

Warsaw has a population of 181,000, and 87,000 are Jews. The Russians have an intense dislike to the Jews, and those best acquainted with the people of the wandering foot say that, of all Jews, the Russian Jews are the worst. Eighteen years ago, no Jew was allowed to remain in Kief longer than twenty-four hours at any one visit, but this, with other exclusive and severe laws, has now been repealed. A great amount of the trade of the country is in their hands. The Russians are naturally an improvident people, and the Jew money-lenders get nobles, and large proprietors, and peasants all alike under their thumb. They bled the Russian military chest to an alarming extent during the late

war. When I was in Kief, a small company of Saxon actors was playing in one of the summer gardens, and officers, tradesmen, and indeed all classes, flocked every evening to the open-air theatre, to witness the principal piece, which was a caricature of the Jew merchants of Russia, who, with their cork-screw curls, long black coats, and unmistakable Israelitish countenances, got up for the occasion, were represented as gloating over the way in which they had fleeced the Gentile. When in Warsaw, I took a walk through Jewry, a district of the city exclusively inhabited by Jews. Their trade activity and acuteness was wonderful to witness, and I could easily understand how the poor Slav fly would have small chance of escape, when he was once entangled in the web of the Semitic spider. The Jewish women in Warsaw have a peculiar custom. They cut off their long hair, woman's glory, and wear a peruke. When we arrived at the frontier, the Jew money-changers were the last men to be seen in Russia, and the first in Austria. At the Russian frontier station they offered me 11 florins 30 kreuzers, for the English sovereign, and at the Austrian, 11 fl. 40 kr. Knowing the peculiarities of these Shylocks, I husbanded my money, and upon arriving in Vienna, went to an exchange office in the Graben, and got 11 fl. 60 kr. The frontier is strictly guarded. Passengers are not allowed to leave the railway carriage until passports have been given up; they are again locked in, after an hour has been consumed in

examining them, and then returned, but only just before the train starts.

At the frontier station of Graniza I met a model travelling Englishman. He was about fifty years of age, and a perfect type of his race. He had been everywhere, and wherever anything was going on, he made it a matter of principle to turn up. Last year he travelled direct from London, to see the bombardment of Rustchuk and Giurgevo, and see it he did, although not without some risk, as he said the Turks kept popping away, whenever they saw a head moving. The bombardment usually lasted from five o'clock in the morning till midday, and it became the fashion to stir out about three o'clock in the afternoon, and see what had been done. The whole of Rustchuk was destroyed, with the exception, strangely enough, of the Hotel St. Petersburg. This gentleman went to Cairo to see the transit of Venus, caught typhoid fever from a caravan of Mohammedan pilgrims, was insensible for a fortnight, got himself carried in a litter to the place selected for observation, on the day of the transit, and was so weak that although he could see the trousers of the observer, he could not catch sight of his face. This little trouble cost him £100. He went to Paris to see the siege, and remained till it was over. He was taken for a spy on one occasion, and led through the streets, amid cries of 'Kill him! kill him!' I asked him if he was going to Cyprus this time, before returning to Eng-

land for the winter,—‘Oh,’ said he, ‘I have been there long ago.’

As my time was only limited in Russia, I returned by way of Paris, expressly to see the productions of her workshops at the Exhibition, and I saw and learned as much in two days, as if I had stayed in the country for six weeks longer, visiting her manufactures. The Russian department, as all who visited Paris last summer are aware, was one of the most magnificent in the building. Russia evidently put out all her strength for the occasion. Her fine art school, so very young in years, was admirably represented, the four paintings, ‘The Railway Train at a Station,’ ‘The Russian Peasants hauling a Barge along a River Bank,’ ‘The Peasant Wedding,’ and ‘The effect of Moonlight upon the Neva opposite the Admiralty,’ being particularly fine, and much admired. In one room was exhibited, in tastefully got up cases, the corn produce of the different provinces. The iron and steel work was such as did credit to that country of splendid iron ore. The leather and furriery cases were of course the finest the world could produce ; but the work in the precious metals eclipsed everything else. The Russians are renowned for their skill in this department, and the national specialty is the gold cake and biscuit basket, with a fine damask serviette thrown over one half of it, and worked in silver. The contrast between the two metals is wonderful in itself, but to see the bright

shining and beautiful pattern of the damask, as finely chased by the tool of the workman, as the loom could have done it, is more wonderful still. This *chef-d'œuvre* of the gold and silver smiths' craft, is a *sine quâ non* on the table of all good families in Russia, and costs between £40 and £60.

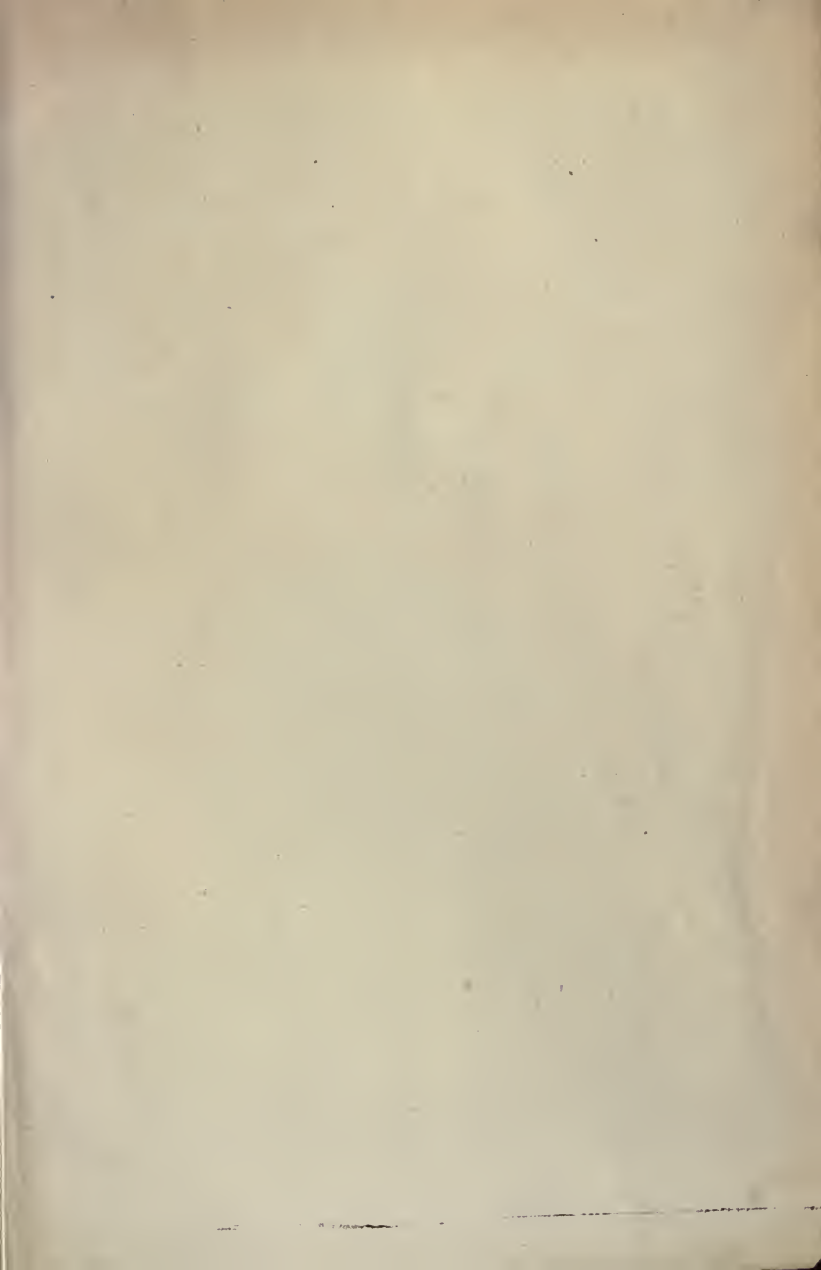
My tour in Russia, in the way of observation and inquiry, and this the description of it, being now concluded, it only remains that I should adventure a very few words upon the present situation, and these I offer, not in the spirit of one who has any special Russian proclivities, but as one who is anxious, as an Englishman, that England should deal with fairness, yea, even with generosity, towards Russia, and thus win for herself that respect and love which she is so well capable of doing. That the outlook is dark and gloomy is not to be denied. The ball set a-rolling three years ago in the Servian campaign has very evidently not got to the bottom of the hill yet. Its progress is only arrested for a short time by a temporary obstruction, and when that has once been removed, it is alarming to contemplate what is likely to take place. In Russia, Austria, Germany, France, wherever I travelled last autumn, the Treaty of Berlin was laughed at, as being any hoped-for settlement of difficulties, which seem to rise into greater prominence with every succeeding day. The Sick Man is still sick. The Greek, told to 'be patient,' is growing more impatient than ever. Austria is little better than a

house built out of a pack of cards. France carries herself nobly, but she is watchful. The great southern peninsula of Europe would like again to put her Italian irons into the fire. Germany is suffering from an aggravated attack of Socialism, which she will never get rid of, until the condition of Europe allows her to reduce her bloated armaments. Russia is sore and uneasy, and England is the same, with perhaps this difference, that she feels even more galled, and is more uneasy, than the Northern Colossus. All this is melancholy to consider; but so far as the last two Powers are concerned, I would ask, if, after all, there is any occasion for so much mutual recrimination and suspicion as there now is?—recrimination and suspicion, there is too much reason to fear, only fostered by a section of the international press. We could ill afford to do without the great services rendered by the Fourth Estate, but when so many irritating telegrams appear in the press from one day to another—telegrams which are almost certain to be flatly contradicted in forty-eight hours, we sometimes could almost wish for such a spice of paternal government, as would keep a surveillance over these sententious and pungent despatches. Russia has annexed a large stretch of territory in Asia; England from time to time has done the same. Russia's position has compelled her to take these steps; our position has constrained us to go and do likewise. Russia has already got more territory

in Asia than she knows what to do with. Do we differ so very greatly from Russia in this respect? The Caspian Khiva Expedition had to turn back ; the camels died, and when the thick felt coverings were taken off the water-barrels, it was found that the water had all evaporated, and the hoops were sprung. I am no statesman, capable of suggesting how the Asiatic difficulty is to be solved, but it appears to me, that the best thing that could happen, would be for Russia and England to meet at some well-marked frontier. With two such mighty Powers facing each other, there would then be the burying of suspicion. As for the European difficulty, that is a riddle which no one apparently can unriddle ; but of this I am certain, that, happen what may, England is well able to give a good account of herself. The Russians are not barbarians, but a great people, with a mighty future awaiting them, and reason and common sense, to say nothing of humanity, and the faith the two peoples have in Him who is the Prince of Peace, all alike unite in recommending and enjoining the existence of amity and common help between Russia and England. These were wise words uttered by Mr. Cobden, when he said that 'he desiderated as little intercourse as possible between the Governments of nations, and as much as possible between their peoples.' When peoples stand aloof from each other in the way of sympathy and good-will, there is even greater danger, than when couriers and Queen's

messengers are posting night and day, and telegraphists are driven frantic by hurrying long and subtle despatches between one Government and another. I went to Russia to see and hear, and according to my light I am persuaded that, the people of that country are peace-loving, and want to be at peace with us, whatever may be the Machiavellian, and covert wishes and designs of the governing classes. I devoutly hope and trust that the desire for peace between England and Russia, which the many millions of Russia crave, may be re-echoed by the many millions of England. This mutual wish, expressed and understood, would convey to either Government a hint, to which it could not afford to close its ears in these days of strong national will, and this in its happy result, would hasten on the coming day, when, under the great Fatherhood of God, there shall be the Blessed Brotherhood of Man, when Slav and Anglo-Saxon, yea, better still,

‘ When man to man, the world o’er,
Shall brothers be, and a’ that.’



DK 26 .C55 1879 SMC
Christie, James,
Men and things Russian
47235496

